

Andrews University

Digital Commons @ Andrews University

Dissertations

Graduate Research

2010

An Investigation of the Relationship Between Community Connectedness and Congregational Spiritual Vitality

Rhonda Louise Whitney
Andrews University

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.andrews.edu/dissertations>



Part of the [Organization Development Commons](#), and the [Religion Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Whitney, Rhonda Louise, "An Investigation of the Relationship Between Community Connectedness and Congregational Spiritual Vitality" (2010). *Dissertations*. 1541.
<https://digitalcommons.andrews.edu/dissertations/1541>

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by the Graduate Research at Digital Commons @ Andrews University. It has been accepted for inclusion in Dissertations by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ Andrews University. For more information, please contact repository@andrews.edu.



Seek Knowledge. Affirm Faith. Change the World.

Thank you for your interest in the

**Andrews University Digital Library
of Dissertations and Theses.**

*Please honor the copyright of this document by
not duplicating or distributing additional copies
in any form without the author's express written
permission. Thanks for your cooperation.*

ABSTRACT

AN INVESTIGATION OF THE RELATIONSHIP
BETWEEN COMMUNITY CONNECTEDNESS AND
CONGREGATIONAL SPIRITUAL VITALITY

by

Rhonda Louise Whitney

Chair: Erich Baumgartner

ABSTRACT OF GRADUATE STUDENT RESEARCH

Dissertation

Andrews University

School of Education

Title: AN INVESTIGATION OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN COMMUNITY
CONNECTEDNESS AND CONGREGATIONAL SPIRITUAL VITALITY

Name of researcher: Rhonda Louise Whitney

Name and degree of faculty chair: Erich Baumgartner, Ph.D.

Date completed: September 2010

Problem

Discussion over how to achieve church growth has been prominent over the first decade of this century and the last half of the 1900s as membership growth in mainline Christian denominations faltered to flat or negative growth. Membership growth in the Oregon Conference of Seventh-day Adventists over the past 10 years has also flattened. Church leaders have responded by putting increased resources and emphasis on evangelism. At the same time, some megachurches that have developed multiple connections with their communities have seen spectacular growth.

Method

This study was conducted to determine if there is a relationship between levels of connectedness in the community to the spiritual vitality, growth, and giving levels of the congregations in the Oregon Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. Previous research and literature is scarce on this topic, therefore a survey was developed, administered, and tested for content validity, external validity, and reliability. This ex-post-facto study encompassed 121 English-speaking churches. The sample consisted of 7,840 church members, of which 3,408 responded, representing 116 churches. Multiple regression and correlational analyses were conducted using the aggregate scores of individuals to form church scores. Of the 25 hypotheses tested, 11 were found to be significant and 6 approached significance.

Results

Results confirm that higher levels of community connectedness predict heightened church vibrancy through increased spiritual vitality. Higher levels of community connectedness also predicted increased church growth when controlled for commute time, congregational spiritual vitality, and volunteerism; and higher levels of community connectedness predicted higher giving levels when controlled for length of denominational membership and congregational spiritual vitality.

Conclusions

This study informs church administrators, pastors, and members that encouraging members to be more involved with their communities may result in higher levels of congregational spiritual vitality, some aspects of membership growth, and some aspects of giving levels. It is recommended that the church give more study to this concept;

consider demographic impacts; educate members of all ages and leaders at all levels; adopt intentional church-growth strategies; and practice holistic evangelism. Practicing holistic evangelism is suggested particularly in the Pacific Northwest, where a substantial portion of the population claims to be spiritual but not religious.

Andrews University

School of Education

AN INVESTIGATION OF THE RELATIONSHIP
BETWEEN COMMUNITY CONNECTEDNESS AND
CONGREGATIONAL SPIRITUAL VITALITY

A Dissertation

Presented in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Philosophy

by

Rhonda Louise Whitney

September 2010

© Copyright by Rhonda L. Whitney 2010
All Rights Reserved

AN INVESTIGATION OF THE RELATIONSHIP
BETWEEN COMMUNITY CONNECTEDNESS AND
CONGREGATIONAL SPIRITUAL VITALITY

A dissertation
presented in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree
Doctor of Philosophy

by

Rhonda Louise Whitney

APPROVAL BY THE COMMITTEE:

Chair: Erich W. Baumgartner

James R. Jeffery
Dean, School of Education

Member: Duane Covrig

Member: Isadore Newman

External: Lionel Matthews

Date approved

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES	vi
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	viii
Chapter	
I. INTRODUCTION.....	1
Background of the Study	1
Statement of the Problem.....	5
Statement of the Purpose	9
General Research Hypotheses	9
Significance of the Study.....	10
Delimitations	11
Definitions and Operational Terms	12
Summary	15
II. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE	17
Introduction	17
Biblical and Theoretical Rationales.....	20
Biblical Rationale.....	21
Theoretical Rationale.....	22
Congregational Studies	23
Demographic Variables	25
Gender	25
Age	26
Education and Income	26
Race, Ethnicity	26
Commute Time.....	27
Location of Church.....	27
Position in Church	28
Local Church Membership.....	28
Length of Denominational Membership	28
Friends	29
Worship Style.....	29
Congregational Vitality	29
Congregational Spiritual Experience	30
Organizational Religiousness.....	32
Commitment.....	33

Members' Connectedness	34
Formal Connections	35
Informal Connections	37
Summary	39
III. METHODOLOGY	42
Introduction	42
Description of the Subjects	44
Data Collection Procedures	44
Design of the Study	46
Assumptions	47
Scope of Study	48
Statement of Hypotheses	48
The Variable List	52
The Instrumentation	56
Table of Specifications Analysis	56
Pilot Study Analysis	58
Data Analysis Plan	59
Demographic Statistics	62
Limitations	63
Summary of Methodology	63
IV. RESULTS OF THE STUDY	67
Preliminary Analyses	67
Data Screening	67
Reliability	68
Descriptive Statistics	69
Correlations Between Dependent and Independent Variables	69
Primary Analyses	71
General Hypothesis 1 (GH1)	71
Specific Hypothesis 1.1 (SH 1.1)	73
Specific Hypothesis 1.2 (SH 1.2)	73
Specific Hypothesis 1.3 (SH 1.3)	74
Specific Hypothesis 1.4 (SH 1.4)	75
Specific Hypothesis 1.5 (SH 1.5)	76
Specific Hypothesis 1.6 (SH 1.6)	78
General Hypothesis 2 (GH2)	79
Specific Hypothesis 2.1 (SH 2.1)	79
Specific Hypothesis 2.3 (SH 2.3)	80
Specific Hypothesis 2.4 (SH 2.4)	80
Specific Hypothesis 2.6 (SH 2.6)	82
Specific Hypothesis 2.7 (SH 2.7)	83
General Hypothesis 3 (GH3)	84
Specific Hypothesis 3.2 (SH 3.2)	85

Specific Hypothesis 3.3 (SH 3.3)	85
Specific Hypothesis 3.4 (SH 3.4)	87
Specific Hypothesis 3.5 (SH 3.5)	88
Summary of Quantitative Research	89
V. SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS	94
Summary of the Study	94
Procedures	95
The Research Hypotheses	96
Conclusions and Discussion	97
First Hypothesis (H1.0 – H1.6)	97
Second Hypothesis (H2.0 – H2.7)	100
Commute Time (SH 2.3)	100
Volunteerism (SH 2.7)	102
Congregational Spiritual Vitality (SH 2.6).	102
Third Hypothesis (H3.0-H3.6).	103
Length of Membership in the Denomination (SH 3.4).	104
Congregational Spiritual Vitality (SH 3.5).	105
Implications	106
Limitations	108
Recommendations for Practice	109
Recommendations for Further Study	115
A Final Thought	117
Appendix	
A. EXPERT PANEL MEMBERS AND TABLE OF SPECIFICATIONS TALLY	120
B. PILOT STUDY	134
C. INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL	144
D. COMMUNITY CONNECTEDNESS SURVEY	146
E. CORRELATION MATRIX	154
REFERENCE LIST	156
CURRICULUM VITA	167

LIST OF TABLES

1. Table of Specifications for Research Instrument	60
2. Respondent Demographics	64
3. Congregation Demographics	66
4. Cronbach's Alpha Internal Reliability Estimates	68
5. Descriptive Statistics on Independent and Dependent Variables	70
6. Correlations Between All Independent and Dependent Variables	72
7. Connectedness Predicting Spiritual Vitality, Hypothesis 1.0	73
8. Connectedness Predicting Spiritual Vitality While Controlling for Age, Hypothesis 1.1	74
9. Connectedness Predicting Spiritual Vitality While Controlling for Position in Church, Hypothesis 1.2	75
10. Connectedness Predicting Spiritual Vitality While Controlling for Commute Time, Hypothesis 1.3	76
11. Connectedness Predicting Spiritual Vitality While Controlling for Length of Membership in Denomination, Hypothesis 1.4	77
12. Connectedness Predicting Spiritual Vitality While Controlling for Membership Growth, Hypothesis 1.5	77
13. Connectedness Predicting Spiritual Vitality While Controlling for Levels of Monetary Giving, Hypothesis 1.6	78
14. Connectedness Predicting Membership Growth, Hypothesis 2.0.	79
15. Connectedness Predicting Membership Growth While Controlling for Age, Hypothesis 2.1	81

16. Connectedness Predicting Membership Growth While Controlling for Commute Time, Hypothesis 2.3	81
17. Connectedness Predicting Membership Growth While Controlling for Length of Denomination Membership, Hypothesis 2.4	82
18. Connectedness Predicting Membership Growth While Controlling for Spiritual Vitality, Hypothesis 2.6	83
19. Connectedness Predicting Membership Growth While Controlling for Levels of Volunteerism, Hypothesis 2.7	84
20. Connectedness Predicting Giving Levels, Hypothesis 3.0	85
21. Connectedness Predicting Giving Levels While Controlling for Position in Church, Hypothesis 3.2	86
22. Connectedness Predicting Giving Levels While Controlling for Commute Time, Hypothesis 3.3	87
23. Connectedness Predicting Giving Levels While Controlling for Length of Denominational Membership, Hypothesis 3.4.	88
24. Connectedness Predicting Giving Levels While Controlling for Spiritual Vitality, Hypothesis 3.5	89
25. Summary of All General and Specific Research Hypotheses.	91
26. Correlation Matrix	155

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Pursuing a doctorate has been a journey quite unlike anything I imagined. My life has been enriched far beyond my expectations. I praise God for impressing me to take this journey. A note taped to my desk reminds me of Solomon, who wrote, “It is the glory of God to conceal a matter; to search out a matter is the glory of kings” (Prov 25:2).¹ I have been immeasurably blessed as the Lord patiently led me on such a difficult and rewarding quest.

But this experience would never have happened without the help of a whole community. Words are inadequate to capture the immense gratitude I feel for the many people who had a part in my journey. First, I want to thank my family and many close friends for allowing me the freedom to miss holidays and gatherings without giving up on the hope of “life after dissertation.” Ironically, I had little or no time to connect while I wrote about the importance of community connections, but you continued to connect with me. And thank you, all of you, for being willing to listen to my detailed explanations of things you little knew or cared.

Special mention goes to Iris Stanley, who painstakingly proofread page after page, even looking up words in the dictionary to make sure they were used correctly. If an error inadvertently appears in this document, it is my own fault; probably a change I made after Iris gave her approval. My neighbors also joined in, from helping me do

¹ All Bible texts, unless otherwise indicated, are taken from the New International Version (NIV).

research to watching after my late elderly dogs, Miso and Cassie, when I had to travel. The two empty puppy beds on either side of my desk remind me of the faithful hours they spent sleeping beside me while I studied.

I am grateful to the Governing Board of Portland Adventist Community Services for helping me launch this educational journey and to the Administration of the Oregon Conference of Seventh-day Adventists for allowing me to continue and finish. Without their financial support, none of this would have happened.

Many professional friends and colleagues assisted me in this study. The informal group who volunteered their thoughts on how they showed love, the expert panel of judges who helped select questions, the pilot group of pastors and lay members who offered feedback were all extremely gracious and accommodating. The community volunteers who freely gave days of their time to assemble questionnaires were amazing.

My sincere gratitude goes to my dissertation chair, Dr. Erich Baumgartner. He inspired me with lofty standards, and was always supportive and encouraging. Dr. Isadore Newman, you were a delight to work with. Thank you for your willingness to open your home and your heart, and to answer any question at any time. I am indebted to Dr. Duane Covrig for his genuine interest in this project and his expert insight and encouragement throughout this process. I wish to also acknowledge the Leadership Department of Andrews University, especially Dr. Shirley Freed, my standard-bearer and inspiration.

This listing would not be complete without huge thanks for the advice and support of my educational journey companions, the Northwest Regional Leadership Group—Cindy Lou Bailey, Sallieann Hoffer, James Weller, and Les Zollbrecht. I have coveted

your ongoing prayers, support, and encouragement. You will always be my friends and colleagues.

To each and every one of those I have mentioned and the many I have missed, thank you for sharing yourselves. You have made this journey possible and I am truly grateful.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to provide information on the background of the problem and to introduce the study. The chapter additionally includes the purpose, research questions, significance of the study, delimitations, definitions, and operational terms, and will conclude with the summary.

Background of the Study

Church denominational administrators and pastors dream of having churches filled with members enthusiastic about their church, of people asking how to be part of the action, and of members who share their faith eagerly and generously support the church financially. Unfortunately for many churches across North America, it is only a dream. Robert Putnam (2000) reports that church attendance has slumped by 10–12% over the last 20 years (p. 70). Likewise, national surveys conducted by Barna Research (Barna, 2009) found that church attendance dropped from 49% in 1991 to 43% in 2004. In the Seventh-day Adventist Church, growth has been essentially flat since 2000 (R. L. Dudley, 2006a). Other denominations report similar trends (Johnson, 2002). Flat or declining growth rates create nervous church leaders concerned for the sustainability of their denominations.

Anecdotal evidence indicates there may be reason to believe that congregations which emphasize community connections will be enhanced with spiritual vigor and more

likely to attract members. This is exemplified in the Aldergrove congregation in British Columbia, Canada, which grew from 300 members in 1994 (Adventist Church Connect, 2009) to over 600 members in 2007 (General Conference Office of Archives and Statistics, 2009). Another example of rapid congregational growth after shifting the church focus to more intentional community connections is the LifeBridge church in Colorado, which grew from 1,100 members in 1996 to 3,000 members worshipping in five services in 2004 (Rusaw & Swanson, 2004, p. 49). A recent press announcement from the Adventist News Network (2010b) heralded the Berean Church in Atlanta as the fastest growing Adventist church in the United States with 3,800 members, citing an emphasis on community and member involvement as the underlying factor driving the growth.

The Seventh-day Adventist denomination has encouraged individual and congregational involvement in the community since its inception in 1863. The church consistently promotes helping the community on the local level through Adventist Community Services as well as worldwide through the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA). The strong emphasis placed on helping others is one reason this study encompassed Seventh-day Adventist congregations.

Another reason this study surveyed Seventh-day Adventists is that, in spite of the emphasis on community involvement, there has been a trend to draw a line between Adventist church members and their communities. Early in the 1900s Christian and Adventist churches responded to an increase of humanism and modernity by recommending that their members separate themselves from these influences. At the same time, society, especially in the United States, alarmed by what seemed an overall

general state of moral decay, began to look to the churches to help solve the social problems of the day (Cameron, Richter, Davis, & Ward, 2005, p. 6).

According to G. L. McIntosh (personal communication, November 6, 2007), in the 1920s, a divide took place between churches over whether to emphasize evangelism or social engagement. Conservative churches tended to emphasize evangelism while liberal churches favored social connections. In the 1950s, a movement emphasizing church growth began mostly among the conservative churches (MacGavran, 1957). Growth was seen as the major indicator of church effectiveness, and was achieved primarily through formal evangelism (Bruce, Woolever, Wulff, & Smith-Williams, 2006, p. 11; Day, 2002, p. 9).

The church-growth movement began to wane in the 1990s as pastors such as Rick Warren, the Hybels, and Steve Sjogren taught that churches are built on “key values and a passion for the lost” (Stetzer, 2008, pp. 12, 13). This shift seemed to spawn increased interest in relief work (such as mission trips and helping the community), resulted in some megachurches, but drew concerns about what Stetzer describes as being “church/body focused” (p. 22).

Current church-growth leaders are encouraging pastors to base church growth on a more holistic missional emphasis that combines the Great Commission—preach the Good News in all the world—and the Great Commandments—love your God with all your heart and your neighbor as yourself (Brownson, Dietterich, Harvey, & West, 2003; Day, 2002; Stetzer, 2008). Churches following this model would ostensibly mirror the culture and demographics of their respective communities (Brownson et al., 2003; Guder, 1998; Metzger, 2007; Stetzer, 2008). Curiously, Metzger (2007) warns that churches

following a missional emphasis may lose members because the “Good News is also costly news” and when faced with service that breaks down divisions of ethnicity and economics “many choosy church shoppers will simply pack their bags, pocketbooks, and wallets at this point and move their allegiance to the church next door” (pp. 50, 51).

Chavez and Higgins (1992), in a 1988 study by Gallup comparing Black and White congregations, found that White churches tend to be most interested in helping a small subset of the congregation (such as an immigrant group) or participating in a project far away, and Black churches were often focused more locally because of social concerns (p. 434). This has been true of White Adventist churches, sending missionaries young and old all over the world. Forming congregations that reflect the local community feels right in a foreign setting, but may be uncomfortable at home for some congregations. Thus, as the Christian church considers a missional paradigm, the Adventist church may feel both more at home and more uncomfortable.

This discomfort may be due in part to the success enjoyed by Adventist members in separating themselves from their communities. A study done by Cynthia Woolever and Deborah Bruce (2004) found that 28% of Adventists focused on connecting with their communities in comparison to 33% of other faiths (see also R. L. Dudley, 2006a). To be fair, neither Adventists nor other faith communities scored well on connecting with their communities.

Connecting with communities is most often considered from a social justice or congregational programmatic viewpoint. Promoting just causes and developing programs for congregations to be more involved in their communities are laudable. Though this study does not ignore these important components, it bores through the collective

endeavors of social action to examine individual compassionate lifestyles of members. Those lifestyles, individual matters of the heart, ultimately become expressed in larger societal action (Bellah, Maden, Sullivan, Swidler, & Tipton, 1996).

Is it possible that the self-interest of Christians in maintaining exclusion from societal worldviews has trumped their ability to show compassion? Can a relationship be found between a lack of connectedness in the community and the ailing health of the church? Have the very values intended to shield members from moral degradation decreased our abilities to relate to our communities and to each other in “unlimited love,” a tradition found in at least eight of the major religions of the world, according to Sir John Templeton (1999), financial wizard, researcher, and founder of the Institute of Unlimited Love?

In any case, research confirms Christian congregations are not alone. Studies confirm that all people, Christians or not, are connecting with other people less and less. Robert Putnam (2000), after compiling an exhaustive array of information from hundreds of studies, discovered that people are becoming less connected with the society around them. They volunteer less, they attend church less, they eat out less, they invite people to their homes less, they write fewer notes and letters, and they join groups less.

Statement of the Problem

Since the death and resurrection of Christ, the Christian church has been intent on sharing the good news of the Gospel. From a most unlikely group of 12 apostles the Christian church has grown to more than 2.2 billion members worldwide (Barrett, 2010).

Since 1863 the Seventh-day Adventist church has grown to more than 16.3 million members (Adventist News Network, 2010a). And yet, paralleling the wane of

personal connections, the growth of Christianity has become nearly flat both around the world and in the United States (Weigel, 2009). This trend is not only true for Christian churches in general, but confirmed by individual denominations. As mentioned previously, Roger Dudley (2006a) states that, since 2000, the growth of the Seventh-day Adventist church in the United States has been basically flat, and Johnson (2002) reports an even more alarming trend for Methodists. The point is, most organized religions are growing very little, if at all.

The problem identified in this study is that Christian churches are not growing as would be expected of vibrant, healthy congregations. Though observation would seem to suggest that churches with more connections in their communities tend to be growing and more spiritually vibrant, empirical evidence to substantiate this assumption is limited. A study initiated by Hartford Seminary and conducted by Faith Communities Today (FACT) suggests there is a relationship between community connections and church growth, though the authors acknowledge this conclusion does not necessarily agree with other research (C. S. Dudley & Roozen, 2001). The FACT study asked leaders in the churches to report growth, but because of the difference in record-keeping of the denominations involved, did not verify the findings through church records. An appropriately validated tool needs to be developed which includes these records.

Researchers agree that religious research is difficult and studies have often been plagued by methodological difficulties (Bruce et al., 2006; Carlton-LaNey, 2007; Hadaway & Marler, 2005; Hugen, Wolfer, & Renkema, 2006; W. M. Newman, Halvorson, & Brown, 1977; Sager & Stephens, 2005; Schwarz, 1996; Smith, 1983; Woolever, Bruce, Wulff, & Smith-Williams, 2006). William Swatos (personal

communication, August 2, 2007), Executive Officer of the Religious Research Association, warns that a distinction must be made between community involvement, compassionate care, and activities that are actually “broader church programming” such as sports leagues (D. Adams & Hess, 2005; Bruce et al., 2006; Dixon & Hogue, 1979; Gunderson, 2000b; Hadaway & Marler, 2005; Huguenot et al., 2006; Kemmelmeier, Jamber, & Letner, 2006; Uslaner, 2002).

Though excellent research exists measuring various aspects of congregational connections with communities, there is almost no research measuring the effect of community connections on congregations (Cnaan & Boddie, 2002; Huguenot et al., 2006; Kanagy, 1992; Smith, 1983). Uslaner (2002) also noted the lack of studies, lamenting, “Neither the Queens Survey nor any other gives details about who benefits from the good works” (p. 249). Current experts are at a loss to cite studies or measurement instruments in this area (D. Adams & Hess, 2005; Edmund Gibbs, personal communication, November 2, 2007; G. L. McIntosh, personal communication, November 6, 2007; Paul L. Metzger, personal communication, December 6, 2007; William H. Swatos, personal communication, August 2, 2007; L. Brian Williams, personal communication, November 7, 2007; Robert Wuthnow, personal communication, August 18, 2009).

Another difficulty is the challenge to find survey methods which quantify such intangibles as *faith* (W. M. Newman et al., 1977; Park, Scherer, & Glynn, 2001). When studying the elements which mobilize congregations, one researcher indicated the “challenges were bigger than the study,” and admits the findings and conclusions could not reliably be quantified (C. S. Dudley, 1991, p. 207). Others have also cited the problem of collecting reliably quantifiable information (D. Adams & Hess, 2005; Bruce

et al., 2006; Dixon & Hogue, 1979; Gunderson, 2000b; Hadaway & Marler, 2005; Hugen et al., 2006; Kemmelmeier et al., 2006; Uslaner, 2002).

Government has encouraged the study of congregations and social ministry to support shifting the burden of society back onto churches (D. Adams & Hess, 2005; Sager & Stephens, 2005). Though the government has produced research findings, those findings report the benefits of receiving service, but do not report the benefits of giving service (Brady, 2006; Gunderson, 2000b).

Some studies have attempted to measure the effects of service and volunteerism on individuals (D. Adams & Hess, 2005; Ellison, 1991; Park et al., 2001), and one study attempted to study congregations through gathering collective congregational opinions through a survey (Dixon & Hogue, 1979).

Perhaps one reason for this dearth of research is given by Smith (1983), who asserts there are few extrinsic rewards to gain from publishing religious research, such as recognition or monetary remuneration. Another reason for fewer religious studies is due to challenges in designing religious research. A major difference between religious scientific research and scientific research in other areas is often methodological. Religious research is often difficult to quantify because of the difficulty of performing experimental or post-facto studies.

Though empirical research is sparse, I postulate that increased community connections can bring positive benefits to congregations. It is important that denominational leaders, pastors, and lay persons understand the positive power of these connections to themselves, their members, and their congregations. At present, most denominations have not developed a meaningful way to represent the strength and quality

of this relationship. The focus of this study was to develop a reliable measurement tool to measure the compassionate connectedness of congregational members in their communities and the relationship of those members' community connections to the life and outlook of a local congregation.

Statement of the Purpose

This study was conducted to determine if a relationship exists between members' community connectedness and congregational spiritual vitality by developing a research tool to explore the following questions: Does a church that is more connected to its community display more congregational spiritual vitality? Is there a relationship between congregational membership growth and levels of congregational community connections? Is there a relationship between congregational giving levels and congregational community connectedness?

General Research Hypotheses

This study endeavored to discover a relationship between members' community connections and congregational health by developing a survey instrument based on the following research questions:

1. Is there a relationship between formal and/or informal community connections and congregational spiritual vitality?
2. Is there a relationship between formal and/or informal community engagement and church membership growth?
3. Is there a relationship between formal and/or informal community engagement and giving levels?

4. Is there a relationship between congregational spiritual vitality and church membership growth?

5. Is there a relationship between congregational spiritual vitality and monetary giving?

6. Is there a relationship between congregational spiritual vitality and volunteerism?

This survey was tested on a representative sample taken from the English-speaking Seventh-day Adventist churches and companies of the Oregon Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. The questionnaire was developed and tested for estimates of validity and reliability as applied to the sample population. In addition, membership records of those churches and companies were examined when available.

Significance of the Study

Administrators, pastors, leaders, and members of all denominations teach the importance of the biblical principle of connecting with our communities (Brady, 2006). This ministry of unlimited love, as exemplified by the life of Jesus, is extremely relevant to Christian congregations worldwide. Understanding the relationship of community connectedness to the vitality and health of congregations is important for at least four reasons.

First, understanding that members' community connections relate positively to congregations helps administrators and leaders justify the allocation of resources to support activities which would foster connectedness.

Second, a study of the relationship of community connectedness and membership levels provides tangible evidence of effective ways to attract members. This is crucial to the continued sustainability of churches.

Third, reliable information on the relationship between members' community connections and congregational vitality helps administrators formulate effective strategies for increasing financial resources in addition to member recruitment.

Last, but perhaps most important, understanding the positive spiritual relationship of enhanced member community connectedness on church vitality provides administrators and leaders with tools to enhance the spiritual experience and optimism of their members and themselves.

Delimitations

English-speaking congregations of the Oregon Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church were chosen for the scope of this study. Similarities in language, record keeping, attitudes toward community involvement, and historical denominational community involvement were all factors considered in identification of the population sample to be studied.

It was beyond the scope of this study to explore members' or congregational motives for making connections in their communities. Neither did this study explore why certain trends may occur in society, Christianity, or the Seventh-day Adventist church. No attempt was made to identify every type of kindness, altruism, or service that may occur as individuals live lives of compassionate love.

There was no attempt to control for types of activities except for activities done as competition, such as league activity. No estimate of the effectiveness or quality of

various formal or informal connections in the community was attempted. Pastoral or administrative support of congregational involvement was not measured in this study.

Definitions and Operational Terms

Research tells us that quantifying a congregation's community involvement is difficult not because there isn't any, but because it is hard to define (Fey, Bregendahl, & Flora, 2006). Indeed, a host of terms, such as *civic engagement*, *social capital*, *community*, *sense of community*, *community ministry*, and *community involvement* have all been used to refer to the many ways congregations connect with, or serve, their communities—members, non-members, or both (Carlton-LaNey, 2007; Gunderson, 1997; Huguenot et al., 2006; Park et al., 2001; Uslander, 2002; Woolever et al., 2006). These terms are most commonly thought to refer to organized church activities of social justice, rather than including the informal spontaneous compassionate acts so central to this study, therefore the terms will be used very sparingly.

While some refer to *social action* as specific caring acts, that is, “sitting with the sick, feeding, caring for others” (Carlton-LaNey, 2007), and others use the term for activities which require less personal involvement, that is, provide meeting space, talk about charity, study groups (Kanagy, 1992), I used terms such as *unlimited love*, *compassionate caring*, or *community connections* to refer to any or all of those things. Also, the term *evangelism* is often connected to formal preaching or proselytizing but is used by Kanagy (1992) to denote members' involvement with social service (p. 50). This study used evangelism to refer to formal preaching or proselytizing.

Another term very difficult to define is *faith*. In a study to discover if volunteer service in community ministry affects the faith of the volunteer, Huguenot et al. (2006)

struggled to find a suitable definition. After choosing to define *faith* as evidenced by specific actions, their conclusions were still compromised because of bias toward certain types of community ministry which they felt indicated a “more mature faith” (Hugen et al., 2006, p. 411). Because of the difficulty in finding a precise definition, the term *faith* was not used as an operational variable in this study.

It is important to note that defining *love*, whether selfless, unlimited, or compassionate, is a nearly impossible task. It is not the purpose of this study to define *love*, but to measure loving actions.

Quantifying intangibles is daunting at best. However, defining a few terms helps clarify the scope of the study. The following terms were used throughout the study, some of them interchangeably:

Community connections or *connectedness* was defined as interactions between members and others who are not church members and performed either formally or informally as a congregation or by private individuals.

Conference is used in the Seventh-day Adventist denomination to denote a pre-determined geographical area in which multiple Seventh-day Adventist churches exist. When used as *Oregon Conference* it refers to the area approximately covering western Oregon from the city of Bend, to the Pacific Ocean, and from the California border, to and including southwest Washington. This area includes 150 churches and companies.

Congregational spiritual vitality or *vigor* in local church congregations was measured by the number of members who reported a vibrant spiritual experience and demonstrated organizational religiousness and commitment.

Connected was defined as “having a social, professional or commercial relationship” (“Connections,” 2009).

Formal connections were activities and interactions done through an organized endeavor, that is, service clubs, church programs, community organizations, neighborhood association meetings, city council, etc., as measured by item 42 on the survey (see Appendix D).

Informal connections were activities and interactions resulting from spontaneous, often self-initiated endeavors, that is, giving money, making food, mowing a lawn, giving a hug, throwing a birthday party, accepting a favor, offering a ride, etc., as measured by items 8, 17, 34, 39j, 40, and 41 on the survey (see Appendix D).

Neighbors were primarily, but not exclusively, defined as anyone who was in the community outside of church membership.

North American Division is used to denote an administrative level of the Seventh-day Adventist denomination based on the geographical areas of Bermuda, Canada, the French possession of Saint Pierre and Miquelon, the United States of America, Johnston Island, Midway Islands, and all other islands of the Pacific not attached to other divisions and bounded by the date line on the west, by the equator on the south, and by longitude 120 on the east.

Organizational religiousness was used to describe individual members’ public religious practices, church attendance, and participation in church activities as measured by items 15, 18, and 19 on the survey (see Appendix D).

Spiritual experience referenced individual members' daily spiritual experiences, a spiritual meaning in life, and private religious practices as measured by items 13-14 and 20-32 on the survey (see Appendix D).

Summary

Along with many other denominations, the Seventh-day Adventist church accepts the mandate of Christ found in Matt 22:39, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." Texts that substantiate this theme can be found throughout the Bible from Genesis to Revelation. Jesus lived His life according to this principle, and most Christian churches believe He has asked His followers to do the same.

Some congregations intentionally responding to the mandate of Matt 22:39 have discovered an increase in congregational vitality as shown by increased membership, church involvement, and financial support. It seems that connecting with the community may increase church vitality and growth.

However, in spite of some localized congregational growth, overall church membership growth rates are dismal. In 2000, only 51% of all the churches in North America recorded membership growth (C. S. Dudley & Roozen, 2001). These growth trends seem to mirror secular society. People are joining less, connecting with their neighbors and community less, and becoming less religious (Putnam, 2000).

As a community outreach director of 150 churches with a background of years of employment in social service, my experience leads me to believe that churches may positively influence their congregational spiritual vitality, reverse the stagnant growth rates, and increase congregational giving by emphasizing a holistic blend of evangelism and mingling with the community. Unfortunately there is little or no empirical evidence

to substantiate my contention. This study initiates a first step in performing research on this topic by developing and validating a scale to measure the connectedness of a church to the community and quantifying the resulting relationships on church congregational vitality.

Quantifying these relationships may help pastors, administrators, and members begin to understand the benefits inherent in following the biblical injunction to love their neighbors with the unlimited love of Christ.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This study focuses on the relation of church members' compassionate community connections to the health of their congregations. The key variables studied are: congregational spiritual vitality as measured by congregational spiritual experience, organizational religiousness and commitment; and community connections as measured by members' formal connections and informal connections in their communities; growth as measured by Oregon Conference records; and giving levels as measured by members' giving of time and dollars to the church. I will begin with the biblical and theoretical literature and conceptual framework related to community connectedness, discuss key studies closest to the intent of this research, and explain how they were used to help develop the scale for this study. Then, after examining the literature on variables related to the health of a congregation, I will discuss the literature pertaining to members' community connectedness. The chapter will close with a summary of the findings in the literature.

Introduction

Showing compassion is good for the brain (Newberg & Waldman, 2009, p. 215). Interdisciplinary study of the effects of compassionate love has exploded since 2000 (Fetzer Institute, 2009; Underwood & Post, 2004).

Keltner (2004) claims, “Compassion is deeply rooted in human nature: it has a biological basis in the brain and body” citing scientific evidence for increased levels of the hormone oxytocin, when compassionate or loving feelings are aroused (p. 9). Another study reports that magnetic research imaging shows the altruistic pleasure center of the brain becomes active when a person does compassionate kindness (Brafman & Brafman, 2008, p. 144). The brain responds both to giving and receiving compassion (Newberg & Waldman, 2009, p. 137).

Discovering a relationship between health and the exercise of compassionate love should not be surprising to Christians. The Bible clearly states in Eph 2:10 that humans are made to do good works. Christians are specifically entreated to “love your neighbor” throughout the Scriptures in Lev 19:18, Matt 19:19, Mark 12:31, Luke 10:27, Rom 13:9, Gal 5:14, and Jas 2:8. Isaiah 58 promises increased spiritual understanding, health, and the blessings of God to those who obey the injunction to compassionately care for others.

And what is compassionate love? The Institute of Research on Unlimited Love (2009) offers the following definition:

The essence of love is to affectively affirm as well as to unselfishly delight in the well-being of others, and to engage in acts of care and service on their behalf; unlimited love extends this love to all others without exception, in an enduring and constant way. Widely considered the highest form of virtue, unlimited love is often deemed a Creative Presence underlying and integral to all of reality: participation in unlimited love constitutes the fullest experience of spirituality.

Knight (2008) describes the connections of compassionate love as actions that “are simple and uncalculating.” He adds, “Helpfulness and mercy have become natural for them [God’s people]. They have internalized the love of God, and it shows up in their daily lives” (p. 97). In stressing the basic importance of compassionate connecting, M. Adams (2005) states, “This brand of engagement, constituted of personal

responsibility to others and a general interpersonal openness, might be considered the bedrock of strong communities” (p. 158).

However, many Christians do not maintain a lifestyle of distributing compassionate love to their neighbors. Dixon and Hogue (1979) found that people prefer connecting only with themselves, their families, or others that are most like them. They found that laity in the Catholic church viewed connecting with the poor or social reform as neutral or irrelevant; in fact, helping others rated lowest on their list of important faith experiences.

Studies confirm that Americans are connecting with other people less and less. Robert Putnam (2000), after compiling an exhaustive array of information from hundreds of studies, discovered that people are becoming less connected with the society around them. They volunteer less, they attend church less, they eat out less, they invite people to their homes less, they write fewer notes and letters, and they join groups less. M. Adams (2005) confirms these trends and points out the conflicted state of emotions this causes. On one hand, he confirms that research shows many people have little desire for sharing with their neighbors (p. 169). On the other hand, his research confirms that “Americans long for connectedness” (p. 31).

The dichotomy of individuals longing to connect while coupled with apparent apathy toward others is sometimes explained through the lens of postmodernism and individuality (Putnam, 2000; Swidler, 2002). Some research proposes that high rates of individuality and the independence of postmodernism create loneliness in individuals which can be alleviated through involvement in church activities and church-sponsored social engagement (M. Adams, 2005, p. 31; de Groot, 2006). Other research strongly

endorses the development of connections through the individual practice of compassionate love as an antidote to the loneliness pervading America (Brafman & Brafman, 2008; Post, 2009; Underwood & Post, 2004).

Individuals can certainly engage in compassionate love on their own, but can they also find opportunities within their churches? There is little agreement on how connected churches are to their communities. Some literature suggests that 9 out of 10 congregations provide some sort of social ministry to their communities (Baggett, 2002, p. 431; Cnaan & Boddie, 2002, p. 231). Ammerman (2001) posits that any average congregation is already engaged with the community (p. 2). Carl Dudley (1991) claims certain types of congregations are more apt to be engaged in the community, while Huguen et al (2006) maintain community ministry ranks low in comparison to other faith practices (p. 423).

The purpose of this study was to develop and validate an appropriate research tool to determine if there is a relationship between members' community connectedness and congregational vitality. Therefore, in this chapter, I explore the biblical and theoretical rationales for compassionate love connections. Then I review the literature relating to the variables used in this study.

Biblical and Theoretical Rationales

Churches are more than buildings. Hadaway (2006) states that congregations are like a "living organism. They are born, they flourish or stagnate, and some even die" (p. 2). And yet, it is the people within those churches who ultimately decide the fate of the church. The rationales provided here address both individuals and churches with the

understanding that the habits, practices, customs, and beliefs of members help shape the church.

Biblical Rationale

William Day (2002), associate director of Leavell Center for Evangelism and Church Health at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, decries the fact that there is little biblical rationale found in research literature to promote church health or involvement in their neighborhoods even though the Bible clearly teaches that followers of Christ should be involved in their communities. Some examples of biblical support for an outwardly focused life are found in Isa 58:10-11, the Gospel Commission (Matt 28:19-20; Mark 16:15; Luke 24:47-48; Acts 1:8; John 17:18; 20:21), and Eph 2:10 (Coleman, 2005; Gunderson, 2000b; Rusaw & Swanson, 2004). This listing is far from exhaustive.

In outlining the history of the Jewish nation before the time of Christ, White (2006) states the ancient Jews learned that not following God's counsel led to captivity and suffering. To keep from sinning, they isolated themselves from the heathen nations, developing practices that ensured them of staying pure. Though designated as God's messengers, they were not willing to compassionately connect with their non-Jewish neighbors, thus rendering it impossible to share with them the good news of a coming Savior (pp. 21-29). When Jesus came to earth, He gave the Jews a different example of connecting. We are told that Jesus "mingled," or connected with people, listened to their heartaches, helped them with their problems, won their trust, then invited them to follow Him (White, 1942, p. 143). Thus the example to Christians today is based on the biblical model of the ministry of Jesus.

Knight (2008) views the exercise of caring compassion as a component of salvation for God's people. Citing the judgment scene depicted in Matt 23:23-24, he states, "The real issue of the judgment is whether individuals have shown tangible love to their neighbors" (p. 97).

Like the Jews of old, Christian churches embrace biblically-based principles which teach members to show compassionate love through connecting with their communities. Scriptures promise good for the giver and receiver, therefore it would seem logical that exercising unconditional love to all without exception would enhance the spiritual and temporal well-being of the congregation, perhaps even resulting in church growth, as suggested by White (1909b, p. 189).

Theoretical Rationale

It is helpful to consider the players in this study: the congregation, the individuals who make up the congregation, and the community. This configuration is parallel to the configuration proposed in the theory of the ecology of human development, developed by Urie Bronfenbrenner (1973, 1977, 1979b, 1986). Drawing from systems psychology, Bronfenbrenner (1973) proposed that humans develop in the context of their environments (p. 2).

Bronfenbrenner (1977) saw these environments as ecological systems, interrelated and nested within each other, like Russian dolls (p. 3). As an example, Bronfenbrenner (1979a) proposed that interactions between each person in the family change when an additional member is added. To apply the theory to this study, the inner doll would be the congregation, the middle doll would be the members, and the outer doll would be the community. When members connect with the outer doll, or the community, it may

change the way the members interact with the inner doll, the congregation. The ecological framework of human development gives theoretical support to the idea that congregations may be affected by the compassionate interactions of their members with their communities. Scriptures and science teach that those connections will produce positive results (Knight, 2008; Newberg & Waldman, 2009; Post, 2009).

Anecdotal evidence indicates there may be reason to believe congregations whose members live lives of compassionate love connections will be enhanced with spiritual vigor and more likely to attract members. Empirical evidence documents how church response builds the community, but there is very little research, if any, that substantiates how that compassionate caring builds congregations (Hugen et al., 2006, p. 411; Swatos, personal communication, August 2, 2007). Literature pertaining to measurements of church vitality and members' compassionate connectedness in their communities will now be discussed.

Congregational Studies

Several significant congregational studies have been done in the last 10 years. The Faith in Communities Today (FACT) studies done in 2000 and in 2005, and the National Congregations Study (NCS), done in 1988 and again in 2006, used large sample sizes and rigorous methods of research (C. S. Dudley & Roozen, 2001; Duke University, 2008). Because both studies measured churches through a congregational spokesman, neither study was used to develop the survey instrument for this study. In this project it was necessary to let individuals speak for themselves, even if in survey form. No leader can be fully aware of the daily life of every member and certainly can report no more than observable outward signs of members' inner spirituality.

The Service and Faith Project, conducted in 2005 through Baylor University, collected information from individuals in congregations through surveys and interviews (Garland, Myers, & Wolfer, 2006). Questions from this survey were not used because of the reliance on qualitative information as well as the inclusion of attitude measurement, which is beyond the scope of this study. The sampling was also limited to urban churches of approximately 150 members, which was not representative of the wider sampling of urban and rural churches of various sizes used for this study.

The U.S. Congregational Life Survey and the North American Division (NAD) Adventist Church Survey collected information from church members and generalized those findings to the congregations represented by the respondents (Sahlin & Richardson, 2008, p. 29; Woolever & Bruce, 2002). One older study was also found which generalized from members to their congregations (Dixon & Hogue, 1979). Win Arn (1987), in the classic *Church Growth Ratio Book*, endorses this type of generalization by observing, “Loving members means a loving church” (p. 36).

To compile the survey instrument for this study, portions of the NAD Adventist Church Survey were used with permission. Many of the questions, especially those dealing with formal volunteering, were similar to questions found in the U.S. Congregational Life Survey, but overall they were more inclusive in areas applicable to this study, especially in identifying giving habits.

All of the studies mentioned were designed to measure various congregational characteristics, but none of them measured members’ personal compassionate connections in the community and the possible relationship to the health or vitality of the congregation. Though a portion of each of them asked about social service in some way,

it was a subset of the scale and the results did not adequately reflect members' compassionate connectedness as a way of life. The variables for this study will now be explored, starting with demographics, congregational vitality, and then individual connectedness.

Demographic Variables

To borrow an analogy from Woolever and Bruce (2002), congregations are much like birds; each one is identifiable by its own characteristics. It is not possible to know a congregation without learning its identifying marks. For this study the following identifying variables were explored: gender, age, education, their commute time to church, income, number of years in the congregation, number of years in the denomination, how many close friends/family not in the denomination, ethnicity, position in congregation, location of church, and the type of church they attended.

Gender

Studies indicate that women are the predominant gender in most congregations (Barna, 2009; Bruce, 2004; Sahlin, 2003, p. 29; Woolever & Bruce, 2002, p. 63). Even though women are the most frequent attendees, gender does not seem to be related to whether people volunteer through their church to help others (Bruce, 2004). This was in contrast to an earlier study which found that women, seniors, and married people are most likely to be involved in social ministry (Uslaner, 2002). Even though women constitute the majority of members, the FACT study revealed that a higher proportion of women is associated with less growth of the congregation (Hadaway, 2006, p. 4).

Age

Overall, frequent church attendees are 50 years or older. People between 25 and 44 years old attend the least (Sahlin, 2003; Woolever & Bruce, 2002, p. 63). Bruce (2004) points out that worshipers 45 years and older are more likely to volunteer in organizations outside of their church. However, younger congregations are more likely to be growing (Hadaway, 2006, p. 2).

Education and Income

Sahlin (2003) found the majority of Adventists have a secondary diploma, but overall are not as highly educated as worship attendees from other faiths (p. 31). Education and income were not found to have a significant relationship as to whether people attend regularly (Woolever & Bruce, 2002, p. 63). Some researchers report that individuals with higher levels of income and education tend to volunteer more (Bruce, 2004; Putnam, 2000; Uslaner, 2002, p. 244). To the contrary, Kanagy (1992) reported a negative correlation between levels of income and education to outreach. Members in the Adventist church are mostly middle class with few coming from low-income households (Sahlin, 2003, pp. 30, 31).

Race, Ethnicity

Garland et al. (2006) flags the importance of recognizing that diverse congregations may require different ways of performing research. Cultural differences and language considerations need to be considered and appropriate adjustments made. Due to time and cost constraints, this research studied only English-speaking congregations.

Adventist churches in North America are predominantly White (70%), 10% Black, and 7% Hispanic. A growing segment have no clear ethnic majority (Sahlin, 2003, p. 28).

The U.S. Congregational Life Survey found that Whites are more likely to be frequent attendees. Foreign-born attend less often (Woolever & Bruce, 2002, p. 63). No matter who attends how often, research shows that multi-racial congregations are more likely to be growing and White congregations are the least likely to be growing (Hadaway, 2006, p. 3).

It is also documented that Blacks have historically been active in social ministry, participating at higher levels than Whites (Carlton-LaNey, 2007, pp. 48-50; Chavez & Higgins, 1992, pp. 425, 426).

Commute Time

Both Putnam and Adams report the average commute to work each day is increasing for Americans. Both claim that this has a measurable impact on the connectedness of individuals in their local communities (M. Adams, 2005; Putnam, 2000). Sahlin (2003) reports that Adventists are more than two and a half times as likely to travel 30 minutes or more than other religions, while only 40% travel 10 minutes or less to attend church (p. 32). The U.S. Congregational Life Study reports that the time it takes to get to church is not related to how often a person attends (Woolever & Bruce, 2002, p. 17).

Location of Church

Churches located in suburbs, especially newer suburbs, are more likely to be growing, while those in rural areas are apt to be declining (C. S. Dudley & Roozen, 2001;

Hadaway, 2006, p. 2). Just over half are located in small town and rural settings. Two-thirds of Adventist churches are located in small towns and rural areas (Sahlin, 2003, p. 31).

Position in Church

Regular attendees are twice as likely to hold a leadership position as less frequent attendees (Woolever & Bruce, 2002, p. 62). Some feel leaders have a great responsibility in helping a church become vibrant and healthy (Werning, 1999, p. 20). Others state that leaders are nurtured within the congregation, preparing them for community leadership roles, thus increasing the likelihood of making connections outside the church family (Schwadel, 2005, p. 160).

Local Church Membership

Most Adventists have been attending their local church for 10 years or less, and the majority of new members tend to be transfers (Sahlin, 2003, pp. 29, 30). This is comparable to research results from other denominations, which reports 52% of respondents having attended 10 years or less and 47% having attended the local congregation for more than 10 years (Roehlkepartain, 2003, p. 5).

Length of Denominational Membership

Research shows that 71% of Adventist church members in North America have been members of the denomination for more than 20 years. Members over 62 years of age are more likely to be in that group. Over the last 20 years the proportion of long-time members has increased significantly, while the percentage of members joining in recent years has declined by half (Sahlin & Richardson, 2008, p. 2).

Friends

Research shows that a network of co-workers, friends, and family is the most influential factor in church growth today, in fact, accounting for 70-90% of all membership growth (W. Arn, 1987, p. 52; Hunter, 1986, p. 72).

Worship Style

The U.S. Congregational Life Study found that the style of about half of the churches was considered traditional by their members, 14% were contemporary, and 33% were blended (Woolever & Bruce, 2002, p. 33).

Though demographics certainly give identifying marks to congregations, it must be remembered that many of the demographics and variables are interrelated and causality cannot be assumed because a relationship may have been identified. The variables relating to Congregational Vitality will now be explored, followed by variables for Individual Connectedness.

Congregational Vitality

It is interesting that research indicates that Seventh-day Adventists are less likely than other religious groups to see themselves as having good church health or vitality (Sahlin, 2003, p. 65). Just exactly what is church health or vitality? There is general agreement that church growth is indicative of a healthy, vibrant church (Hadaway, 2006, p. 15; Sahlin, 2003, p. 8). Considering that researchers see growth as essential to church vitality, it must be noted that the population growth of Christianity is nearly flat both around the world and in the United States (Weigel, 2009). As mentioned earlier, this trend is not only true for Christian churches in general, but confirmed by individual denominations (Dudley, 2006a; Johnson, 2002).

The variables used to measure congregational vitality for this study are based on a project conducted by the Fetzer Institute designed to study religion/spirituality and health. A panel identified 12 areas, or domains, to measure a person's religiousness/spirituality and health. Of those, 5 were directly applicable to this study: (a) daily spiritual experiences (one's experience with God in daily life), (b) meaning (one's search for meaning in life), (c) private religious practices (one's religious practices outside of a formal setting), (d) commitment (specifically one's giving of time or money to the church), and (e) organizational religiousness (one's observable participation in the congregation) (Fetzer Institute, 2003).

As part of the report, the panel provided an extensive list of questions called the Multidimensional Measurement of Religiousness/Spirituality (MMRS) for the use of other researchers, stating, "Please contact the Fetzer Institute for additional copies of this publication, which **may be used and reprinted without special permission**" (Fetzer Institute, 2003, emphasis theirs). Because of the rigorous method of questionnaire development and extensive testing for reliability and validity, questions from this survey instrument were used to measure members' daily spiritual experiences, meaning, and private religious practices.

Following the domains of the MMRS, congregational vitality was measured by three subscales: (a) Congregational Spiritual Experience, (b) Organizational Religiousness, and (c) Commitment.

Congregational Spiritual Experience

Congregational spiritual experience is measured as a composite of members' daily spiritual experiences, meaning, and members' private religious practices.

Individual daily experience

Literature agrees that members' spirituality is a key component to a vibrant church (Hadaway, 2006, p. 7; Sahlin, 2003, p. 16). An exception to that is voiced by Woolever and Bruce (2004), who found that congregations that scored high on growing spiritually were often not growing numerically. They warned against using growth as the most important index of a congregation's health and vitality (p. 113). The Adventist churches studied as part of the U.S. Congregational Life Survey reported that not even half of the members were growing spiritually (R. L. Dudley, 2006a), but Sahlin (2003) reported additional research indicating that Adventist members have a vibrant spiritual life (p. 60).

Questions measuring this variable were used from the short version of the MMRS Daily Spiritual Experiences Survey and reflect the scope of questions normally asked in other surveys (Fetzer Institute, 2003, p. 85).

Meaning

Transcendent meaning in a person's life is an important component of religiosity and/or spirituality. These questions were included to allow the respondent to provide information related to individual self-perceptions of overall religiosity/spirituality (Fetzer Institute, 2003, pp. 19, 89).

Private religious practices

Private religious practices pertain to one's religious practices outside of a formal setting. Researchers agree that "spiritual growth can result from private religious activities" (Woolever & Bruce, 2002, p. 25). Adventists concur, with nearly two-thirds

reporting they spend time every day or most days in private prayer and Bible study, significantly more than other faiths (Sahlin, 2003, p. 59).

Organizational Religiousness

Organizational religiousness is the second domain of congregational vitality and is comprised of the public practice of one's faith and measurements of participation, including church growth, length of church membership, and size of the congregation.

Public practice

Public practice pertains to the observable participation of individuals in the congregation. Research asserts that "spiritual growth can result from participation in worship services or other congregational activities" (Woolever & Bruce, 2002, p. 25). Those who participate regularly are more than twice as likely to attend small groups of any kind, including Sabbath School (Bruce, 2004, p. 62). These groups also enhance connections between members, which in turn foster involvement in church activities. It has been found that members who have at least seven friends in the congregation tend to remain active participants in the congregation (W. Arn, Nyquist, & C. Arn, 1988).

Participation

Research shows that compassionate loving is key to church growth (W. Arn et al., 1988, p. 128). Further research tells us smaller churches are less likely to be growing than larger churches, and newer congregations (established in the 1990s) are also more likely to be growing (Sahlin, 2003, p. 18). It would seem that measuring church growth would be rather straightforward, but research cautions that church growth should be measured by comparing the percentage of church growth as recorded on the church books and

adjusted for various types of losses to actual church attendance (Knowles, 1997, p. 131; Sahlin, 2003, p. 9). Respondents were asked to report their church attendance in the last month, but because of cautions raised by Hadaway and Marler (2005), who claim people self-report more church involvement than is actually the case, Oregon Conference membership records were consulted to minimize optimistic self-reporting (pp. 318, 319).

C. Dudley and Roozen (2001) found that “half the congregations in the United States have fewer than 100 regularly participating adults. . . . A full quarter of congregations have fewer than 50 regularly participating adults, while less than 10% have more than 1,000” (p. 8). Other research is similar when adjusted for the age of the attendees when they report that the average church size based on regular attendees 18 years or older is 80 (MacIntosh, 2008, p. 9; McCollum, 2005; Woolever & Bruce, 2002, p. 18). Sahlin (2003) reports that most Adventist churches have fewer than 200 members attending (p. 33). Data show that churches with under 100 members are more inclined to be helpful (Bruce, 2004).

Commitment

Commitment is the third variable of church vitality which must be considered to gain a complete picture of the health of a church. In the MMRS, commitment refers specifically to the giving of money to, or through, the church. Other authors also include an individual’s time as an indication of commitment (Bielby, 1992, p. 283; O’Reilly & Chatman, 1986, p. 497).

Sharing one’s monetary resources with the church is usually a sign that a member is committed to the mission of the congregation (Fetzer Institute, 2003, p. 71; O’Reilly & Chatman, 1986, p. 497). The Seventh-day Adventist church strongly encourages

members to return regular tithes and offerings. This practice is also common among other faiths; however, only about 7% of adults actually tithe (Barna, 2008). Congregational financial health is a collective endeavor, and research has found that greater congregation growth spawns greater congregational financial health (Hadaway, 2006, p. 15).

Research shows that Christians are generous, with almost three-fourths of worshipers donating money to a charitable cause outside the congregation (Bruce, 2004). Adventists trail a bit behind, but over half of them make donations to charities other than their local church (Sahlin, 2003, p. 51).

The variables of Congregational Vitality have been examined and now the variables of Members' Connectedness will be explained.

Members' Connectedness

Humans are made for connecting. The Commission on Children at Risk (2003) reports that "we are hardwired for other people and for moral meaning and openness to the transcendent. Meeting these basic needs for connection is essential to health and to human flourishing" (p. 2). Connections are also basic to church growth. "A primary way people first connect with a congregation is through a pre-existing relationship with someone who is already involved" (Hadaway, 2006, p. 12).

For the purposes of this study, connecting was defined as interactions between members and others who are not church members through a political, social, professional, or commercial relationship ("Connections," 2009). These connections may happen formally or informally.

Formal Connections

Formal connections are those which are made through an organized endeavor, that is, service clubs, church programs, community organizations, neighborhood association meetings, city council, etc. Formal connections may include, but are not limited to, church-sponsored activities. C. Dudley and Roozen (2001) posit that serving the community is as much a part of expressing one's faith as are prayer groups, attending worship services, or studying theological doctrines.

Research shows that, overall, people in North America are willing to give time and dollars and care about those in their communities, even strangers (Kemmelmeier et al., 2006, p. 327). It is reported that 50 to 60% of Americans participate in community service at least once a year and a higher percentage donate money or material goods (Ammerman, 2001; Baggett, 2002); however, these numbers are questioned by Hadaway and Marler (2005), who claim people self-report more church involvement than is actually the case (pp. 318, 319).

Ninety-eight percent of Seventh-day Adventist members reported giving money for charitable causes, but less than 3 out of 10 (28%) reported direct hands-on volunteering for the community (R. L. Dudley, 2006a). Furthermore, Christians, especially conservative Christians, are more likely to volunteer in religious activities with people from their own group (Kanagy, 1992; Uslaner, 2002). Specifically this holds true for Catholics and Seventh-day Adventists (Ammerman, 2001, p. 19; Dixon & Hogue, 1979, p. 165; W. M. Newman & D'Antonio, 1978, pp. 144, 145).

According to Sahlin (2003), even though three out of four local Adventist churches conduct or co-sponsor an emergency food pantry or soup kitchen, this is less than other denominations. Adventists are more likely to have clothing programs, health

education and health screening programs, and prison ministries, though in general they are less involved in community service than are other faith groups and are reaching fewer people. Adventists are also less likely than other denominations to get involved in community service organizations not connected to the church. Sahlin (2003) urged, based on the findings of the FACT study, “that Adventist congregations need to get more involved in public service and social concern” (pp. 47, 49, 50). Other research found that the least likely to be involved are new immigrant groups (non-Christian) and “other” Christians, that is, Mormons and Jehovah’s Witnesses (Ammerman, 2001, p. 18). Overall, more than one out of five (23%) worshippers do not volunteer for any organization (Bruce, 2004).

FACT 2005 found very little relationship between community service and church growth for Adventist congregations. A slight positive relationship was shown in congregations who provided housing or counseling services, but those were the least likely services that a church offered (R. L. Dudley, 2006b). Roughly 45% of Christian worshippers volunteer service time through either their congregations or other organizations and groups (Bruce, 2004). Other research claims that congregations with direct participation in community outreach and social justice ministries are more likely to grow and express vitality (C. S. Dudley & Roozen, 2001).

As mentioned in chapter 1, Adventists have long encouraged community service work through their churches. The stereotypical picture of Adventist Community Services in the United States is often a small group of people, predominantly women, in the last decades of their lives tying quilts, sorting clothes, or giving out food. As important as this work is, it is not focus of this study. This study does not measure typical Adventist

community service, but looks at a variety of ways a congregation connects with the community through the compassionate lifestyles of the members.

It has been recommended that members give at least 2 hours of service a week as reasonable levels of commitment (Knowles, 1997, p. 63). This recommendation was specifically targeted to get members involved in evangelism, not in compassionate love as a way of life. Even so, studies have shown that volunteers who give 100 hours a year enjoyed the best health benefits. There seems to be no difference in health benefits for putting in more hours (Post, 2009).

Questions measuring formal connections were taken from the NAD Adventist Church Information Survey because it was the most complete of any survey for this variable and asked the questions in a format compatible with this study.

Informal Connections

While the literature does address formal connections, there is another realm that is typically not addressed. Another type of connection addressed in the definition given above for Unlimited Love is that of connecting informally with others. Informal connections result from spontaneous, often self-initiated endeavors, for example, giving money, making food for someone, mowing a lawn, giving a hug, throwing a birthday party, accepting a favor, offering a ride, etc. Informal connections may be done in groups or by an individual. They do not include formal volunteering for the church or another organization. Informal connections happen with no thought of recompense or reward. White (1902) describes these actions as “self-forgetful . . . acts of tender kindness and deeds of unselfish love” (para. 26727).

This is different from being nice to one's neighbor solely for evangelistic purposes. Informal connections may result in faith-sharing activities, but that is not the primary motive for compassionate unlimited love as defined in this study. Even so, according to White (1905), the life of "a true, lovable Christian" is a "powerful argument . . . in favor of the Gospel" (para. 14446).

This study adds to current literature in the area of informal connections. No study could be found that directly and completely measured informal connections, therefore a panel of 10 advisors was asked to submit ways they showed spontaneous love. They were chosen on basis of their expertise in research techniques, their professional expertise, and from a variety of personalities. These answers were compiled into themes from which questions were drawn to develop the questionnaire (see Appendix D).

Research partially addresses this variable by reporting that almost half (49%) donated or prepared food for someone outside their family or congregation and a little more than one in five (22%) cared for someone outside the family who was very sick (Bruce, 2004).

It was also reported that in Adventist congregations a third loaned money to someone outside their family, one-fourth provided health care for a sick person outside their family, two out of five donated or prepared food for someone in the community other than their own church members, and one in five helped someone outside their family find a job (Sahlin, 2003, p. 51). Other faiths loaned about the same amount to a person outside of the family (Bruce, 2004).

Summary

Literature shows that compassionate love brings health to individuals (Post, 2009). Based on the ecological theory of Bronfenbrenner, increased individual spiritual health may bring greater vitality to the congregations in which they worship. Church growth has been basically flat in the North American Seventh-day Adventist church since 2000 (R. L. Dudley, 2006a). Other denominations are reporting similar trends. Anecdotal evidence indicates there may be reason to believe that congregations with members connecting to their communities through compassionate love will be enhanced with spiritual vigor, be more likely to attract members, and enjoy increased giving levels. Very little, if any, empirical evidence exists to substantiate these assumptions. Though much has been written on the benefits of the gift of congregational compassion to society, the literature is nearly silent on how those endeavors for the community affect the congregations.

Concrete definitions are sometimes elusive in religious terminology, making it difficult to quantify what seem like mystical aspects (Carlton-LaNey, 2007; Chavez & Higgins, 1992; Gunderson, 2000a; Hugen et al., 2006). Even so, empirical evidence is needed to quantify the effect of members' compassionate community connectedness on the vitality of churches.

Denominational administrators and pastors would be thrilled to have churches filled with members enthusiastic about their church; asking how they can become part of the action; and who are kind and caring and generously support the church. Some believe a more intentional emphasis on compassionate love and social action may result in positive benefits for the congregation (Mullins, Brackett, Bogie, & Pruett, 2006; Rusaw & Swanson, 2004; Woolever et al., 2006).

The information provided by this study is very valuable. First, understanding how unlimited love impacts congregations justifies allocating resources to support those activities in the congregation. Second, a study of the impact of members' lifestyles of compassionate love on congregations documents the benefits of holistic ministry as evidenced by increased congregational vitality and spirituality.

Moving toward more community connectedness has been difficult in part because pastors tend to significantly underestimate the interest and willingness of the congregation to participate in this endeavor (C. S. Dudley, 1991, p. 203). Church growth and giving levels may be enhanced by encouraging lifestyles of unconditional love—by and for every member and those with whom they come in contact.

Congregational community connecting might be increased by combining the spiritual component of “loving your neighbor as yourself” as a response to a call from God (Coleman, 2005; de Groot, 2006; Fey, Bregendahl, & Flora, 2006; Hahn, 2007; Sager & Stephens, 2005) in conjunction with the social picture of American isolation painted by Putnam (2000) and M. Adams (2005); and the practical components of compassionate love where helping our neighbors becomes not what we do, but who we are (D. Adams & Hess, 2005; Gunderson, 1997; Newberg & Waldman, 2009; Post, 2009; Rusaw & Swanson, 2004).

This study of the benefits of members' community connectedness serves as a springboard for further exploration into the positive reciprocal impact on members, pastors, and denominations for blessing their communities.

Churches may benefit by encouraging their members to adopt a lifestyle exemplified by Jesus to mingle, listen, serve, and win the trust of those in the community.

Increased social ministry is needed to enhance the spiritual vitality of both members and congregations. This study reliably demonstrates the relationship of community connectedness to congregational health through the development and validation of a community-connectedness scale.

Even though collecting data on congregations is challenging (W. M. Newman et al., 1977), measuring the formal and informal connections of members can provide a bridge between theoretical abstractions and practical reality (D. Adams & Hess, 2005, p. 2). Compassionate loving is an important part of a Christian life and is part of the foundation of a healthy congregation. Denominations are large, but it is well to remember, according to Sahlin (2003, p. iii), that “upon the health and strength of local congregations depends the entire fabric of Adventist institutions and its global mission” (p. iii).

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this chapter is to present the research rationale and design used to study the effects of church member community connections upon the health of their local congregations. This chapter contains information regarding the population studied and the sampling processes. The development of the instrument used to collect the data is described along with the procedure for data collection, the variables measured in the study, and specific information explaining data analysis processes.

Introduction

This study was designed to gather data and information to inform members, pastors, and administrators of the Seventh-day Adventist church of the relationship of community connectedness to the spiritual vitality, giving levels, and membership growth of their congregations. The Pacific Northwest was an ideal place to do this study because organized religions in the United States tend to show denominational strength according to geographical regions. Thus, the Southwest has been predominantly Catholic, the Southeast predominantly Southern Baptist, the Great Salt Lake basin predominantly Mormon, the Upper Midwest predominantly Lutheran and the Northwest and West showing as “none” when asked to report religious affiliation (Shibley, 2005, para. 4). These regions are changing gradually; however, Gallup polls reveal that these regions are

changing and that the “none” preference of the West is spreading to the East (Newport, 2009). In fact, researchers report America is becoming less religious and churches are declining in membership (Brady, 2006; R. L. Dudley & Muthersbaugh, 1996; Hadaway & Marler, 2005; Johnson, 2002; Newberg & Waldman, 2009, p. 73; Traggorth, 2006). Because of the history of large percentages of those claiming no affiliation with organizational religion in the Northwest, conducting this study in the Oregon Conference provides a lens by which to view future trends across the United States.

Even as the “nones” report less affiliation in denominations, they insist they are spiritual, thus drawing a line between religiosity (attending, participating in, and promoting a particular denominational set of beliefs) and spirituality (an inward belief system built upon individual preference) (Killen & Silk, 2004; Sahlin, 2003, p. 35). It has been recommended that the way to reach those who view themselves as spiritual rather than religious is to show them compassion, connecting with them in ways that show genuine love and concern, living beside them as neighbors and friends (Clouzet, 2009; Killen & Silk, 2004). White (1942) agrees, stating that the method of Christ in showing compassion is the only truly successful church-growth strategy (p. 143).

This chapter informs readers as to the research protocol used to collect and analyze data. Specifically this chapter is organized into the following sections: (a) description of the subjects, (b) data collection procedures, (c) design of the study, (d) assumptions, (e) scope of the study, (f) statement of hypotheses, (g) the variable list, (h) description of the instrumentation, (i) data analysis plan, (j) limitations, and (k) summary of methodology.

Description of the Subjects

Churches and companies in the Oregon Conference of Seventh-day Adventists served as the sample for this study. The following list details eligibility for participation in the study: (a) eligible congregations must be officially recognized as an Oregon Conference church or company in the most recent edition of the Oregon Conference Directory, (b) eligible congregations must use English as the official language of their church. There were approximately 121 officially recognized English-speaking churches and companies listed in the 2009 *Oregon Conference Directory*.

Complete individual anonymity was assured, as the researcher asked for no identifying information such as name or address. All scores were combined to complete the research, and no individual scores were released for any reason. Composite survey information was made available to individual congregations upon their request after publication of the study.

Data Collection Procedures

The problem to be solved in this study was to construct a research instrument to measure the connectedness of a church congregation to its community and the relationship of that connectedness to the growth and vitality of the congregation. Data for this study were collected through stratified random sampling, a probability sampling technique in which the population was divided into groups based upon a specific variable (I. Newman & McNeil, 1998, pp. 50, 51). Church members who attended church an average of twice each month, as reported by the pastor, were chosen for this study. This process included testing and estimating the reliability and validity of the research instrument.

In the first phase of testing the research instrument a small sample of respondents was selected representing the demographic makeup of the active membership of the churches identified for the study. The questionnaire was revised according to their feedback. The size of the sample was dictated by the length and complexity of the questionnaire.

The second phase of data collection began with a notice emailed from the Oregon Conference Administration to the pastors of all the churches identified as eligible for participation in the study. This notice informed pastors of the study and elicited their participation. Each pastor was requested to submit a list of church members whose church attendance averaged at least twice a month. This was followed 2 weeks later by a short presentation to a gathering of the pastors explaining the study and how it would be conducted. Pastors were requested to finish submitting the active church membership lists for their congregations.

To control the size of the study, a representative sample was randomly selected from the active membership lists provided by the pastors (I. Newman & McNeil, 1998, p. 89). Surveys were put in envelopes with those names on the envelopes. Surveys were distributed by courier to the pastors of each congregation and he was asked to distribute them appropriately. After 4 weeks the pastors returned the completed questionnaires.

Membership records of those churches and companies involved in the full sample of the population were examined when available. These records were retrieved from Oregon Conference archives with help from Administration.

Design of the Study

An ex-post-facto research design was used in this study. Ex-post-facto research, often called *causal comparative research* or *correlational research*, is used when the independent variable is an attribute rather than an active variable (I. Newman & Benz, 1998, p. 41), and is used when the research “is initiated after the independent variable . . . has already occurred or the independent variable is a type that cannot be manipulated” (I. Newman, C. Newman, Brown, & McNeely, 2006, p. 99).

In ex-post-facto research, participants are not chosen randomly because they have already predetermined themselves prior to the study. No treatment is applied since the study measures a state that already exists and the variables cannot be manipulated.

According to I. Newman and Benz (1998), if the question deals with causation, ex-post-facto design is inappropriate (p. 129). If it deals with relationships then ex-post-facto design is appropriate. The intent of the study is to determine if there is a relationship between the level of congregational community connectedness and the spiritual vitality, membership growth, and giving levels of that congregation.

There are three weaknesses that result from doing a study using ex-post-facto research design. Those weaknesses are the inability to manipulate the variables, the inability to randomize the participants, and the tendency of the researcher to draw inaccurate conclusions because of the inability to manipulate the variables (I. Newman, Benz, Weis, & McNeil, 1997, p. 38).

The three types of ex-post-facto research are listed in order of lowest to highest internal validity: (a) without hypotheses, (b) with hypotheses, (c) with hypotheses and tests of alternative hypotheses (I. Newman et al., 2006, p. 103). This study was guided by hypotheses and tests for alternative hypotheses; therefore it achieves greater internal

validity. Even so, it must be kept in mind that “only with a true experimental design does one have the experimental control to achieve internal validity” (I. Newman & Benz, 1998, p. 42). Though some researchers find it tempting to suggest causation, especially when using analysis of variance as a research analysis technique, there is no attempt to claim causality on the basis of the findings of this study because ex-post-facto research “can never have total internal validity. Therefore, causation can never be inferred” (I. Newman et al., 2006, p. 104).

In ex-post-facto research, not manipulating the variables may increase the likelihood of achieving high external validity. Because the sample population was studied without imposing experimental controls, the results of ex-post-facto research are more easily generalized to the general population. Though total internal validity is not achievable, ex-post-facto studies “tend to have the most external validity” (I. Newman et al., 2006, p. 104). This study has a high degree of external validity because of the large sample studied in a region consisting of a majority population with low involvement in traditional religious denominations. This phenomenon is growing across North America, according to Sahlin (2003), making broader generalizability possible (p. 34).

Assumptions

First, it was assumed that self-reported demographic information of participants (i.e., gender, age, church position) was free from error. Second, it was assumed congregations were sufficiently alike to make cross-comparisons. Third, it was assumed the variance in members’ self-reported activity was randomly dispersed.

Scope of Study

The Seventh-day Adventist denomination has encouraged individual and congregational community connectedness since its inception in 1863. The strong emphasis placed on helping others is one reason this study utilizes Seventh-day Adventist congregations. Other reasons also apply, including systematized record-keeping, similarities in attitudes toward community involvement, and historical denominational attitudes toward societal worldviews.

This study attempted to measure community connectedness both in terms of congregational programs and individual community engagement. There was no attempt to control for types of activities except for activities done as competition, such as league activity. No estimate of the effectiveness or quality of various activities on the community was attempted. Pastoral or administrative support of congregational involvement was not measured in this study. Reasons for pre-study personal or congregational connections were beyond the scope of this research. No attempt was made to evaluate the kinds of connections or the effectiveness of those connections on the recipient(s) or their communities.

Statement of Hypotheses

According to Salkind (2008), hypotheses are used to transform research questions and objectives into measurable statements which determine the techniques to be used in testing the hypotheses (p. 121).

A study of fast growing churches revealed that focusing on meaningful worship did not produce rapid growth, but focusing outwardly positively affected congregational strength (Bruce et al., 2006, pp. 120-122). Christian churches claim to embrace biblically

based principles which teach that members should care for the poor as part of their personal faith experience. Biblically based mandates are given for the good of the giver and receiver; therefore it would seem logical that connecting with their communities would enhance the well-being of the congregation, possibly resulting in church growth, as suggested by White (1909b, p. 189).

Based on that theoretical frame, this research attempted to demonstrate that certain relationships exist. Those relationships are: (a) that the spiritual vitality of the congregation would be related to community connectedness, (b) that membership growth would be related to community connectedness, and (c) that giving levels would be related to community connectedness.

Therefore, the following primary and secondary directional hypotheses or prediction statements formed the basis for this study:

Hypothesis 1.0: Congregations more connected to their communities will score higher on indicators of spiritual vitality than those less connected to their communities.

Hypothesis 1.1: Congregations more connected to their communities will score higher on indicators of spiritual vitality, independent of age, than those less connected to their communities.

Hypothesis 1.2: Congregations more connected to their communities will score higher on indicators of spiritual vitality, independent of position in church, than those less connected to their communities.

Hypothesis 1.3: Congregations more connected to their communities will score higher on indicators of spiritual vitality, independent of commute time to church, than those less connected to their communities.

Hypothesis 1.4: Congregations more connected to their communities will score higher on indicators of spiritual vitality, independent of length of membership in the Seventh-day Adventist denomination, than those less connected to their communities.

Hypothesis 1.5: Congregations more connected to their communities will score higher on indicators of spiritual vitality, independent of membership growth, than those less connected to their communities.

Hypothesis 1.6: Congregations more connected to their communities will score higher on indicators of spiritual vitality, independent of levels of monetary giving, than those less connected with their communities.

Hypothesis 2.0: Congregations more connected to their communities will score higher on indicators of membership growth than those less connected with their communities.

Hypothesis 2.1: Congregations more connected to their communities will score higher on indicators of membership growth, independent of age, than those less connected with their communities.

Hypothesis 2.2: Congregations more connected to their communities will score higher on indicators of membership growth, independent of position in church, than those less connected with their communities.

Hypothesis 2.3: Congregations more connected to their communities will score higher on indicators of membership growth, independent of commute time to church, than those less connected with their communities.

Hypothesis 2.4: Congregations more connected to their communities will score higher on indicators of membership growth, independent of length of membership in the Seventh-day Adventist denomination, than those less connected with their communities.

Hypothesis 2.5: Congregations more connected with their communities will score higher on indicators of membership growth, independent of levels of monetary giving, than those less connected with their communities.

Hypothesis 2.6: Congregations more connected with their communities will score higher on indicators of membership growth, independent of spiritual vitality, than those less connected with their communities.

Hypothesis 2.7: Congregations more connected with their communities will score higher on indicators of membership growth, independent of levels of volunteerism, than those less connected with their communities.

Hypothesis 3.0: Congregations more connected with their communities will score higher on indicators of giving levels than those less connected with their communities.

Hypothesis 3.1: Congregations more connected with their communities will score higher on indicators of giving levels, independent of age, than those less connected with their communities.

Hypothesis 3.2: Congregations more connected to their communities will score higher on indicators of giving levels, independent of position in church, than those less connected with their communities.

Hypothesis 3.3: Congregations more connected to their communities will score higher on indicators of giving levels, independent of commute time to church, than those less connected with their communities.

Hypothesis 3.4: Congregations more connected to their communities will score higher on indicators of giving levels, independent of length of membership in the Seventh-day Adventist denomination, than those less connected with their communities.

Hypothesis 3.5: Congregations more connected to their communities will score higher on indicators of giving levels, independent of spiritual vitality, than those less connected with their communities.

Hypothesis 3.6: Congregations more connected to their communities will score higher on indicators of giving levels, independent of membership growth, than those less connected with their communities.

The Variable List

The following variables, both independent (IV) and dependent (DV), were used in this study:

Congregational Vitality (DV) is comprised of three domains: congregational spiritual experience, organizational religiousness, and commitment. Each variable is discussed with reference to how it is measured.

Congregational Spiritual Experience (DV): The first domain of congregational vitality is defined as a composite of members' daily spiritual experiences, meaning, and members' private religious practices. This variable was measured in terms of percentage of members involved in church activities outside of worship, such as small groups, prayer circles, carrying a leadership position, or reporting a feeling of closeness to God. It was also measured by self-reported involvement in private prayer and Bible study. This is in line with measurements from other research as reported by Sahlin (2003, p. 9).

Individual Daily Experience (DV): As a subcategory of Congregational Spiritual Experience, questions measuring this variable were used from the short version of the Multidimensional Measurement of Religiousness/Spirituality Survey (MMRS) and reflect the scope of questions normally asked in other surveys (Fetzer Institute, 2003, p. 85).

Meaning (DV): A second subcategory of Congregational Spiritual Experience, these questions taken from the MMRS were included to provide information related to individual self-perceptions of overall religiosity and spirituality (Fetzer Institute, 2003, pp. 19, 89).

Private Religious Practices (DV): The third subcategory of Congregational Spiritual Experience, private religious practices pertain to one's religious practices outside of a formal setting, that is, private Bible study and prayer. These questions, also taken from the MMRS, were used to measure respondents' participation in a private devotional life.

Organizational Religiousness (DV): Organizational religiousness is the second domain of congregational vitality and is comprised of the public practice of one's faith and measurements of participation, including growth and size of the congregation.

Public Practice (DV): A subscale of Organizational Religiousness, public practice pertains to the observable participation of individuals in the congregation. It is measured by questions taken from MMRS and also from the North American Division (NAD) Adventist Church Survey (Sahlin & Richardson, 2008).

Participation (DV): Also a subscale of Organizational Religiousness, participation pertained to the measurable part of membership growth. Respondents were asked to report average attendance each month and if they were involved in a church

leadership position of any kind. In addition to self-reporting, the rate of church growth was measured by decadal church records of membership for each church involved in the study.

Commitment (DV): Commitment, the third domain of church vitality, is defined as any type of monetary or time donation to the church or community. Respondents were asked to self-report a percentage of income given to the church in the past year and the number of hours donated in the past year to community or church organizations.

Connectedness (IV): Connecting is defined as interactions between members and others who are not church members through a political, social, professional, or commercial relationship (“Connections,” 2009). These connections were separated into interactions that may have happened either formally or informally.

Formal Connections (IV): Formal connections, a subscale of connectedness, are those which are made through an organized endeavor, that is, service clubs, church programs, community organizations, neighborhood association meetings, city council, etc. Formal connections may include, but are not limited to, church-sponsored activities. Questions measuring formal connectedness were taken from the NAD Adventist Church Information Survey.

Informal Connections (IV): Informal connections, a second subscale of connectedness, are defined as spontaneous, often self-initiated endeavors, that is, giving money, making food for someone, mowing a lawn, giving a hug, throwing a birthday party, accepting a favor, offering a ride, etc. Informal connections may be done in groups or by an individual. They do not include formal volunteering for the church or another

organization. Questions for this variable were based on the NAD Adventist Church Information Survey and the phenomenological experience of the researcher.

Age (IV): Referred to the chronological age of respondents in years and was reported in clusters of ages starting at 18 years old, the age for inclusion in the study.

Gender (IV): Referred to the sex of the respondent and was measured as follows: 0 = male, 1 = female.

Commute Time to Church (IV): Respondents were asked to report the number of minutes they traveled to reach their church from 10 minutes or less to more than 30 minutes.

Position in Church (IV): Used to identify persons carrying leadership roles within the church which were identified as pastor, member holding a church office or other position of service, and member not holding a church office or other position of service.

Church Membership (IV): Used to establish a participant's eligibility for inclusion in the study, that is, must have been a member of the local church distributing the survey.

Length of Membership in Seventh-day Adventist Church (IV): This variable established the average length of time respondents were members of the Seventh-day Adventist denomination.

Education and Income (IV): These variables established the highest level of education attained by the respondent and the approximate category of household income they represented.

Race and Ethnicity (IV): Measuring this variable provided a composite look at the church congregation and how this variable might relate to community connectedness of the members.

Location of the Church (IV): This demographic variable established whether a church was located in a city, suburb of a city, small town, or rural community.

Friends (IV): The number of friends in the community, and the number of immediate family members (parents, spouse, children) who are not formal members of the Seventh-day Adventist church and measured as *10 or more*, *5-9*, *1-4*, or *none*.

Worship Style (IV): The type of church a respondent attends was measured by rating their church as more traditional, more contemporary, or about the same as other churches.

The Instrumentation

As described above, the subject of this study was to develop an instrument to discover any possible correlations between community connectedness and the spiritual vitality, membership growth, and giving levels of a church congregation.

The research instrument was developed in three stages as recommended by Benson and Clark (as cited in Creswell, 2008, p. 167). The first step was to develop content in consultation with expert judges. A Table of Specifications was developed, as described in the next section. Using this Table of Specifications, test items were revised, added, or deleted in response to the evaluations provided by the judges. After reaching at least 80% agreement on wording and structure of the research instrument, the second phase consisted of preparing and administering the instrument as a pilot test. In phase three, the test was administered to the larger sample of the population.

Table of Specifications Analysis

The Table of Specifications was developed from specific criteria evidenced in the literature relating to individual connections and church health (I. Newman & Benz, 1998,

p. 38). The table was distributed to experts in related fields (see Appendix A) for their assessment of how well and how completely the items measured the content areas. The experts were asked to check the items they felt represented the areas of content, then asked to provide percentages showing how well they felt each area of content was measured (see “Table of Specifications” Appendix A). Items were used that received a rating of at least 80% (marked by four out of five judges).

The judges were asked to suggest any additional items which should be included. A total of 10 suggestions were made. Of those, six suggestions were beyond the scope of this study. One suggestion was added to the survey (item 19, “Out of the last four Sabbaths, how many times did you attend Sabbath School?”), and due to the length of the questionnaire, the other three were not included because the judges indicated the content areas were complete without them.

One judge indicated that three of the constructs (*Informal Connectedness*, *Spiritual Experience*, *Commitment*) were over-measured and suggested that questions be included for which there were comparative norms from other studies. This was done except for the construct *Informal Connectedness*, for which comparative norms for some of the items were not always available due to the unique nature of this study.

Prior to the changes noted above, the scale’s overall constructs, based on expert judge validity, were 92%. This was calculated by identifying a mean percentage score from five experts in the field of church connections in response to the question “Are the questions you have marked in each column sufficient to measure that variable? Please answer with a percentage, for example: ‘95%’ (sufficient).” After making the changes noted, the content validity estimate might be even higher.

Pilot Study Analysis

According to Creswell (2008), a research instrument must have good estimates of both reliability and validity. And so, when developing a research instrument it is crucial to test for these attributes (p. 169). This survey was developed and tested for reliability by administering it to a small part of the target population.

After finalizing the Table of Specifications the pilot study was conducted to determine correct wording, item order, and length of time to fill out the questionnaire. The draft survey (see Appendix B) was administered to a sample of 14 English-speaking respondents representative of the sample population selected for this study.

Suggestions from those taking the survey ranged from identifying typographical or grammatical errors and suggesting wording for clarify instructions, to questions on word definitions and the meanings of questions. From these suggestions, item 17 was changed from “I give large amounts of time and money to help others” to “How often do you give money to help others?” Item 35 was changed from “How much of your annual income do you give to your local church?” to “How much of your annual income do you give to your local church, including all tithes and offerings?” Also, respondents indicated item 42, measuring formal connections, was too long, which supported the opinions of the expert panel; therefore, several items were combined or removed.

The most common feedback was elicited from the content of item 41 which measured informal connections. This feedback was emotional in nature, rather than objective. Summarizing the feelings of some others, one respondent stated, “This section was a little annoying to me because sometimes the opportunity doesn’t arise to do these things and so they don’t happen.” Others felt the survey identified a missing area in their lives. No respondent suggested any changes for item 41.

Respondents reported test-taking times ranging from 7–23 minutes. At their request, instructions in the cover letter were adjusted from “Most people take about 15 minutes to answer all the questions” to “It is estimated the survey will take about 20 minutes to complete.”

Though researchers agree that reliability and validity are important, some feel that validity may “be the most important characteristic of any test” (I. Newman et al., 2006, p. 47). Salkind (2008) agrees, stating, “You cannot have a valid instrument without it first being reliable” (p. 118). This study utilized two tests to estimate validity. Content, or logical, validity was obtained by asking the panel of five expert judges to judge validity of the research instrument (I. Newman & Benz, 1998, p. 38). In addition, determining concurrent, or known-group, validity is appropriate for this study since it measured a group against itself through a measurement taken at the same time (Creswell, 2008, p. 173; I. Newman et al., 2006, p. 48; Siegle, 2009, Section 2b). In other words, concurrent validity was established by correlating the test scores with current information about the congregations.

Table 1 delineates which items in the research instrument measured the concepts to be studied.

Data Analysis Plan

As exemplified in an earlier study done by Kanagy (1992), the unit of analysis in this study was the congregation (p. 40). The scores reported by individuals were reported as composite scores for the dependent variables (spiritual vitality, giving levels). These scores were reported as frequencies and percentages of the dependent variables.

Table 1

Table of Specifications for Research Instrument

	Item Number(s)
Demographics	1 - 7, 9–12, 40
Congregational Vitality	
Spiritual Experience	13-14, 20-32
Organizational Religiousness	15, 18, 19
Commitment	16, 33, 36, 38
Community Connectedness	
Informal Connections	8, 17, 34, 39j, 40-41
Formal Connections	42

Whereas a null hypothesis indicates equality between variables, a research hypothesis is written to indicate inequality, or a relationship between variables which can be non-directional or directional (Salkind, 2008, p. 126). Hypotheses based upon existing literature and theory are considered stronger than those based upon the hunch of the researcher (p. 131).

Because the *F* test is very robust in analysis of variance, it was used to test for statistical significance of the relationships outlined in the hypotheses (I. Newman et al., 2006, p. 94). By using the *F* test, the assumptions of random selection of the non-probability sample and normal distribution of the variables can be violated with less effect on the accuracy of the procedure (I. Newman et al., 2006, p. 66). Both inferential and descriptive statistics were utilized to analyze the data collected. Demographic data

were collected in order to best describe the sample population. The hypotheses related to the respondents' gender, age, commute time to church, number of years in the denomination, and position in congregation. The participants were asked to self-report this information.

In order to clearly and completely report the description of the sample, frequency distribution tables were generated that record descriptive statistics for each of the 12 demographic categories: gender, ethnicity, position in church, age, education, church location, commute time, income, number of years in congregation, number of years in denomination, number of close friends/family not in the denomination, and the worship style of the church they attend.

In order to determine whether to accept or reject the research hypotheses, and to determine the significance of the independent variable (community connectedness) in predicting the dependent variable (congregational vitality), multiple linear regression was used to analyze the responses to the research instrument. This form of statistical analysis is appropriate when there is a single criterion variable (Y) and multiple predictor variables (X) (Hinkle, Wiersma, & Jurs, 2003, p. 121). The hypotheses state that community connectedness is related to scores for congregational vitality. In addition, other independent variables, such as age, commute time to church, position in church, and length of membership in the Seventh-day Adventist denomination were hypothesized to be significantly related to the test results.

Multiple regressions allow flexibility in writing models to reflect the specific research questions and can also be used to test relationships between various types of variables, either categorical or continuous.

Two-tailed tests of significance were used when the direction of the hypotheses was unknown due to uncertainty as to the relationships of the variables being tested. When the relationship between variables was fairly certain, the one-tailed test was used.

SPSS 18 (PASW 18) for Windows® (Green & Salkind, 2005) was used to generate the full and restricted multiple regression models. An alpha level of .05 was used as the criteria for determining whether to accept or reject the hypotheses. This confidence level is appropriate for the subject of this study and for decreasing the probability of making either a Type I or Type II error (Hinkle et al., 2003, pp. 177-179).

Demographic Statistics

Three thousand four hundred and eight church members responded to this survey. Of those respondents, 41% were male, 59% were female. The average age was between 55-64 years. Respondents reported having attended some college, with 23% reporting average incomes of \$30,000 to \$49,999, and 20% reporting average incomes of \$75,000 or over. These members reported racial representation of 1% American Indian, 2% Asian, 1% African American, 0% Black not African, 0% Black Caribbean, 2% Hispanic, 0% Hawaiian, 92% White, and 1% Other. On average for close friends, casual friends, and immediate family members who were not Seventh-day Adventist, the average church member reported having between one and four in each category. However for professional friends, a higher percentage reported having 10 or more (see Table 2).

Churches were used as the measurement of analysis for this study. One hundred and sixteen churches were represented in the sampling of the population for this study. The majority of the churches were rural, though the largest number of respondents represented churches located in small towns with populations less than 50,000. The

worshipping styles varied depending on the church. Fifty-six percent said that their church was traditional, 20% said their church was contemporary, and 41% reported their church had about the same type of worship as other churches (see Table 3).

Limitations

The study was limited by the following considerations: (a) the inability of the researcher to use probability sampling of the population studied, (b) the inability of the researcher to manipulate the variables in the study, therefore limiting internal validity and the ability to make causal inferences, (c) the possible predisposition of the expert judges to the traditional programmatic community services of the Seventh-day Adventist church, and (d) reluctance of some pastors to promote members' participation in this study.

Summary of Methodology

Details regarding the methodology and research design of the proposed study have been enumerated in this chapter. There is almost no previous research performed in the area of the relationship of congregational connectedness to other areas of church vitality and growth. Therefore, the focus of this ex-post-facto study was to develop a research instrument suitable for measuring those relationships. This research instrument was tested for estimates of both reliability and validity in English-speaking congregations of the Oregon Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. Both full and restricted linear regression models were used to test the 22 research hypotheses and to determine whether congregations consisting of more members with community connections had higher rates of congregational spiritual vitality.

Table 2

Respondent Demographics

	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	3,383	100.0
Male	1,392	41.1
Female	1,991	58.9
Age	3,408	99.9
Less than 18	51	1.5
19-24	52	1.5
25-34	182	5.3
35-44	284	8.3
45-54	558	16.4
55-59	391	11.5
60-64	396	11.6
65-74	678	19.9
75-84	598	17.5
85 and over	218	6.4
Education	3,368	100.0
High School unfinished	223	6.6
High School or GED finished	523	15.5
Some college	1,111	33.0
College degree	994	29.5
Post-college degree	517	15.4
Family Income	3,221	94.9
Under \$10,000	190	5.9
\$10,000-\$19,999	422	12.4
\$20,000-\$29,999	508	14.9
\$30,000-\$49,999	780	22.9
\$50,000-\$74,000	650	19.1
\$75,000 or over	671	19.7

Table 2—*Continued.*

	Frequency	Percentage
Race	3,408	100
American Indian or Alaska Native	34	1.0
Asian or Pacific Islander	72	2.1
African American	34	1.0
Black (not African American)	14	0.4
Black (Caribbean)	0	0.0
Hispanic or Latino/a	78	2.3
Native Hawaiian	3	0.1
White (Not Hispanic or Latino/a)	3,135	92.0
Other	38	1.1
Number of Non-SDA Close Friends	3,236	100.0
None	707	21.8
1 to 4	1,371	42.4
5 to 9	553	17.1
10 or more	605	18.7
Number of Non-SDA Casual Friends	3,214	100.0
None	343	10.7
1 to 4	1,012	31.5
5 to 9	760	23.6
10 or more	1,099	34.2
Number of Non-SDA Professional Friends	3,046	100.0
None	874	28.7
1 to 4	762	25.0
5 to 9	418	13.7
10 or more	992	32.6
Number of Non-SDA Family	3,248	100.0
None	1,007	31.0
1 to 4	1,222	37.6
5 to 9	455	14.0
10 or more	564	17.4

Note. N=3,408.

Table 3

Congregation Demographics

	Congregation Frequencies	Congregation Percentage	Respondent Frequencies	Respondent Percentage
Church Location				
City $\geq 50,000$	5	4.4	874	26.5
Suburb of a city	25	21.9	293	8.9
Town $< 50,000$	27	22.6	1,478	44.8
Rural	59	51.1	655	19.8
Total	116	100.0	3,300	100.0
Church Worship Style				
Traditional	56	48.0	1,505	44.2
Contemporary	20	17.0	604	17.7
Same as others	41	35.0	1,208	35.4
Total	116	100.0	3,317	97.3

Note. $N=116$. Respondent ($N=3,408$) frequencies and percentages provided for comparison purposes.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this chapter is to present the outcomes of the analysis derived from the data collected and to investigate the relationship of community connectedness to congregational vitality. Results from the research are presented in this chapter, which is organized into three sections. In the first section the preliminary analyses are presented, which include data screening, internal reliability, and descriptive statistics, including frequencies and percentages. The second section, primary analyses, answers the three overarching and the four related research questions posed in this study. This chapter concludes with a summary of the results.

Preliminary Analyses

Data Screening

Data were entered into SPSS version 18 (PASW 18). Since the unit of analysis in this investigation was the church, the 3,408 participants were aggregated by the 121 churches they attend. Any missing data were left blank and no data imputations were conducted. There were no outliers and the residuals in the analyses were normally distributed so no transformations were required. Therefore, demographic and descriptive statistics were computed. Demographic and descriptive statistics for the participants were described in chapter 3 under *Participants*.

Reliability

Reliability for the five subscales created by the research instrument and used in this study was calculated using Cronbach's Alpha. This technique estimates the internal consistency of the overall subscales. For the first three subscales the reliability was relatively good. Congregational Spiritual Vitality had an internal consistency of 0.877. Informal connectedness had an internal consistency of 0.878. The internal consistency of Formal Connectedness was slightly lower with an alpha of 0.669. Both Levels of Monetary Giving and Levels of Volunteerism had a lower internal consistency with a 0.548 and 0.500 respectively. This lower internal consistency may be the result of both of these subscales that are comprised of only two items. The number of items in a subscale has a direct impact on the overall internal consistency (see Table 4).

Table 4

Cronbach's Alpha Internal Reliability Estimates

Variables	Cronbach's Alpha Number of Items	
Spiritual Vitality	0.877	22
Informal Connectedness	0.878	25
Formal Connectedness	0.669	19
Levels of Monetary Giving	0.548	2
Levels of Volunteerism	0.500	2

Descriptive Statistics

Table 5 includes the descriptive statistics for the 3,408 participants who were aggregated by the 116 churches. In this study, 2% of the respondents were pastors and 70% held a church office or other position of responsibility. The remaining 27% were members not holding any formal church office or position of responsibility. Thirty-nine percent reported commute time as 10 minutes or less, followed by 38% as 11 to 20 minutes. Thirty-one percent reported being members of their local church for more than 20 years, and 87% reported membership in the Seventh-day Adventist denomination more than 10 years. Congregational spirituality, formal and informal connectedness, monetary giving, and volunteerism are computed variables based on multiple survey questions, as explained in chapter 3; therefore, results are reported as a composite percentage. Overall congregational spirituality was 76%. Of the congregations sampled, 46% reported higher formal connectedness and on average the congregations reported right in the middle on the informal connectedness scale. The congregations reported that 45% had higher rates of monetary giving and 55% reported higher rates of volunteerism in and for their churches. Membership growth for English-speaking churches in the Oregon Conference based on official church records from 1999–2009 was 0% (see Table 5).

Correlations Between Dependent and Independent Variables

Spiritual Vitality had a significant positive relationship with Informal Connectedness ($r = .271, p = <0.01$), Formal Connectedness ($r = .313, p = <0.01$), Level of Monetary Giving ($r = .485, p = <0.01$), Levels of Volunteerism ($r = .588, p = <0.01$),

Table 5

Descriptive Statistics on Independent and Dependent Variables

	Frequencies	Percentage
Position in Church		
Pastor	57	1.7
Church position	2,361	69.3
No church position	921	27.0
Total	3,339	98.0
Commute Time		
10 minutes or less	1,321	39.0
11-20 minutes	1,292	38.2
21-30 minutes	571	16.8
More than 30 minutes	199	5.9
Total	3,383	99.9
Length of Local Church Membership		
One year or less	124	3.7
1-5 years	833	24.6
6-10 years	653	19.3
11-20 years	721	21.3
More than 20 years	1,049	30.8
Not a member	9	0.3
Total	3,389	100.0
Length of Denominational Membership		
Not a member	7	0.2
Less than 1 year	44	1.3
1 year	32	0.9
2 years	30	0.9
3 years	47	1.4
4 years	52	1.5
5 years	50	1.5
6-10 years	169	5.0
More than 10 years	2,949	87.2
Total	3,380	99.9
*Congregational Spiritual Vitality	116	76.0
*Formal Connectedness	116	46.0
*Informal Connectedness	116	50.0
*Levels of Monetary Giving	116	45.0
*Levels of Volunteerism	116	55.0
Membership Growth	116	0.0

* Indicates variables computed from multiple survey questions as explained in chapter 3; therefore no further breakdown is available.

Age ($r = .231, p = <.01$) and Officer ($r = .204, p = <0.05$). Spiritual Vitality had a significant negative correlation with Of Non-SDA (offerings to non-denominational charities) ($r = -.194, p = <0.05$), Membership Growth ($r = -.203, p = <0.05$), and Commute Time ($r = -.230, p = <0.05$). Membership growth also had significant positive correlation with Formal Connectedness ($r = .212, p = <0.05$) and a significant negative correlation with levels of monetary giving ($r = -.332, p = <0.01$) (see Table 6).

Primary Analyses

This section reviews the statistical results and presents the findings in table form for the research hypotheses. All of the general and specific research hypotheses were investigated individually. However, due to the large number of hypotheses, only the general hypotheses and the specific research hypotheses that were significant or approached significance are presented in this section. All of the results are summarized at the end of this chapter.

General Hypothesis 1 (GH1)

The first research hypothesis states: Congregations more connected to their communities will score higher on indicators of spiritual vitality than those less connected to their communities. A Multiple Linear Regression was conducted to investigate this hypothesis. The overall results of GH1 were found to be significant, with Informal, Formal, and Of Non-SDA (offerings to non-denominational charities) significant in predicting spiritual vitality ($F_{3,111} = 9.976$ and a $p < 0.001$) with 21.2% of the total variance in spiritual vitality being accounted for by these three predictors. Of these predictors, Of Non-SDA and Informal Connectedness accounted for a significant proportion of unique variance with $p = 0.001$ and 0.012 respectively (see Table 7).

Table 6

Correlations Between All Independent and Dependent Variables

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1. Spiritual Vitality	1.000											
2. Informal Connectedness	0.271**	1										
3. Formal Connectedness	0.313**	0.605**	1									
4. Of Non-SDA	-0.194*	0.163	0.178	1								
5. Levels of Monetary Giving	0.485**	0.009	-0.077	-0.240**	1							
6. Levels of Volunteerism	0.588**	0.106	0.151	-0.127	0.475**	1						
7. Membership Growth	-0.203*	0.175	0.212*	0.165	-0.332**	-0.206*	1					
8. Age	0.331**	-0.126	-0.029	-0.302**	0.413**	0.168	-0.312**	1				
9. Length of Membership	0.005	-0.076	-0.042	0.119	0.320**	0.027	-0.065	0.257**	1			
10. Commute Time	-0.230*	0.194*	-0.043	0.040	-0.168	-0.181	0.221*	-0.218*	-0.206	1		
11. Pastor	0.101	-0.180	-0.127	0.233*	0.234*	0.421**	-0.115	-0.097	0.096	-0.182	1	
12. Officer	0.204*	0.343**	0.084	-0.327**	0.232*	0.286**	-0.104	0.038	0.002	0.202*	-0.461**	1

* Indicates correlation significant at the $p < .05$ level. ** Indicates correlation significant at the $p < .01$ level.

Table 7

Connectedness Predicting Spiritual Vitality, Hypothesis 1.0

Variable	<i>b</i>	<i>SE B</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
(Constant)	4.887	.332		14.739	.000
Of Non-SDA	-.358	.112	-.274	-3.196	.002
Informal Connectedness	.013	.005	.273	2.550	.012
Formal Connectedness	.040	.022	.199	1.852	.067

Note. $F_{3,111} = 9.976$, $R^2_{\text{changed}} = 0.212$ and $p < 0.001$.

Specific Hypothesis 1.1 (SH 1.1)

Congregations more connected to their communities will score higher on indicators of spiritual vitality, independent of age, than those less connected to their communities. A Multiple Linear Regression was conducted to investigate this hypothesis. The overall results of SH1.1 were found to be significant, with Informal, Formal, and Of Non-SDA significant in predicting spiritual vitality ($F_{3,110} = 8.045$ and $p < 0.001$) with 15.8% of the total variance in spiritual vitality being accounted for by these three predictors. Of these, Of Non-SDA and Informal Connectedness accounted for a significant proportion of unique variance with $p = 0.034$ and 0.0162 respectively (see Table 8).

Specific Hypothesis 1.2 (SH 1.2)

Congregations more connected to their communities will score higher on indicators of spiritual vitality, independent of position in church, than those less connected to their communities. A Multiple Linear Regression was conducted to investigate this hypothesis. The overall results of SH 1.2 were found to be significant,

with Informal, Formal, and Of Non-SDA significant in predicting spiritual vitality ($F_{3,109}=15.193, p<0.001$) with 26.3% of the total variance in spiritual vitality being accounted for by these three predictors (see Table 9). All three of the Connectedness predictors accounted for a significant proportion of unique variance with Of Non-SDA ($p = 0.001$), Informal Connectedness ($p = 0.001$), and Formal Connectedness ($p = 0.012$).

Table 8

Connectedness Predicting Spiritual Vitality While Controlling for Age, Hypothesis 1.1

Model	Variable	<i>b</i>	<i>SE B</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Restricted	(Constant)	4.725	.145		32.503	.000
	Age	.098	.025	.347	3.936	.000
Full	(Constant)	4.332	.363		11.927	.000
	Age	.077	.024	.272	3.183	.002
	Of Non-SDA	-.243	.114	-.186	-2.143	.034
	Informal Connectedness	.012	.005	.252	2.440	.016
	Formal Connectedness	.038	.021	.188	1.819	.072

Note. $F_{3,110}=8.045, R^2_{\text{changed}}=0.158$ and $p<0.001$.

Specific Hypothesis 1.3 (SH 1.3)

Congregations more connected to their communities will score higher on indicators of spiritual vitality, independent of commute time to church, than those less connected to their communities. A Multiple Linear Regression was conducted to investigate this hypothesis. The overall results of SH 1.3 were found to be significant, with Informal, Formal, and Of Non-SDA significant in predicting spiritual vitality ($F_{3,110}=10.681, p<0.001$) with 21.3% of the total variance in spiritual vitality being

Table 9

Connectedness Predicting Spiritual Vitality While Controlling for Position in Church, Hypothesis 1.2

Model	Variable	<i>b</i>	<i>SE B</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Restricted	(Constant)	4.851	.126		38.376	.000
	Pastor	.735	.265	.289	2.775	.006
	Officer	.576	.165	.364	3.493	.001
Full	(Constant)	4.237	.333		12.736	.000
	Pastor	1.186	.236	.467	5.027	.000
	Officer	.524	.145	.332	3.607	.000
	Of Non-SDA	-.381	.109	-.292	-3.510	.001
	Informal Connectedness	.017	.005	.357	3.554	.001
	Formal Connectedness	.044	.019	.222	2.281	.025

Note. $F_{3,109} = 15.193$, $R^2_{\text{changed}} = 0.263$ and $p < 0.001$.

accounted for by these three predictors. Of these predictors, Of Non-SDA and Informal Connectedness accounted for a significant proportion of unique variance with $p = 0.002$ and 0.002 respectively (see Table 10).

Specific Hypothesis 1.4 (SH 1.4)

Congregations more connected to their communities will score higher on indicators of spiritual vitality, independent of length of membership in the Seventh-day Adventist denomination, than those less connected to their communities. A Multiple Linear Regression was conducted to investigate this hypothesis. The overall results of SH 1.4 were found to be significant, with Informal, Formal, and Of Non-SDA significant in predicting spiritual vitality ($F_{3,110} = 10.041$, $p < 0.001$) with 21.5% of the total variance in spiritual vitality being accounted for by these three predictors. Of these predictors,

Table 10

Connectedness Predicting Spiritual Vitality While Controlling for Commute Time, Hypothesis 1.3

Model	Variable	<i>b</i>	<i>SE B</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Restricted	(Constant)	5.539	.097		57.074	.000
	Commute Time	-.129	.049	-.239	-2.619	.010
Full	(Constant)	4.976	.322		15.449	.000
	Commute Time	-.133	.045	-.246	-2.944	.004
	Of Non-SDA	-.343	.108	-.263	-3.165	.002
	Informal Connectedness	.016	.005	.332	3.143	.002
	Formal Connectedness	.028	.021	.138	1.298	.197

Note. $F_{3,110}=10.681$, $R^2_{\text{changed}}=0.213$ and $p<0.001$.

Of Non-SDA and Informal Connectedness accounted for a significant proportion of unique variance with $p = 0.002$ and 0.012 respectively (see Table 11).

Specific Hypothesis 1.5 (SH 1.5)

Congregations more connected to their communities will score higher on indicators of spiritual vitality, independent of membership growth, than those less connected to their communities. A Multiple Linear Regression was conducted to investigate this hypothesis. The overall results of SH 1.5 were found to be significant, with Informal, Formal, and Of Non-SDA significant in predicting spiritual vitality ($F_{3,110}=12.038$, $p<0.001$) with 23.7% of the total variance in spiritual vitality being accounted for by these three predictors. All three of the Connectedness predictors account for a significant proportion of unique variance with Of Non-SDA ($p = 0.005$), Informal Connectedness ($p = 0.006$), and Formal Connectedness ($p = 0.023$) (see Table 12).

Table 11

Connectedness Predicting Spiritual Vitality While Controlling for Length of Membership in Denomination, Hypothesis 1.4

Model	Variable	<i>b</i>	<i>SE B</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Restricted	(Constant)	5.258	.404		13.022	.000
	Length of Membership	.004	.053	.008	.082	.934
Full	(Constant)	4.672	.483		9.668	.000
	Length of Membership	.029	.048	.052	.610	.543
	Of Non-SDA	-.367	.113	-.281	-3.239	.002
	Informal Connectedness	.013	.005	.275	2.555	.012
	Formal Connectedness	.040	.022	.200	1.860	.066

Note. $F_{3,110} = 10.041$, $R^2_{\text{changed}} = 0.215$ and $p < 0.001$.

Table 12

Connectedness Predicting Spiritual Vitality While Controlling for Membership Growth, Hypothesis 1.5

Model	Variable	<i>b</i>	<i>SE B</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Restricted	(Constant)	5.294	.022		240.972	.000
	Membership Growth	-1.473	.666	-.204	-2.211	.029
Full	(Constant)	4.741	.322		14.722	.000
	Membership Growth	-1.921	.606	-.266	-3.172	.002
	Of Non-SDA	-.314	.109	-.240	-2.888	.005
	Informal Connectedness	.014	.005	.289	2.805	.006
	Formal Connectedness	.048	.021	.239	2.301	.023

Note. $F_{3,110} = 12.038$, $R^2_{\text{changed}} = 0.237$ and $p < 0.001$.

Specific Hypothesis 1.6 (SH 1.6)

Congregations more connected to their communities will score higher on indicators of spiritual vitality, independent of levels of monetary giving, than those less connected with their communities. A Multiple Linear Regression was conducted to investigate this hypothesis. The overall results of SH 1.6 were found to be significant, with Informal, Formal, and Of Non-SDA significant in predicting spiritual vitality ($F_{3,110}=12.718, p<0.001$) with 19.7% of the total variance in spiritual vitality being accounted for by these three predictors. All three of the Connectedness predictors account for a significant proportion of unique variance with Of Non-SDA ($p = 0.033$), Informal Connectedness ($p = 0.005$), and Formal Connectedness ($p = 0.012$) (see Table 13).

Table 13

Connectedness Predicting Spiritual Vitality While Controlling for Levels of Monetary Giving, Hypothesis 1.6

Model	Variable	<i>b</i>	<i>SE B</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Restricted	(Constant)	3.913	.235		16.667	.000
	Levels of Monetary Giving	.271	.046	.485	5.893	.000
Full	(Constant)	3.292	.374		8.808	.000
	Levels of Monetary Giving	.270	.041	.484	6.523	.000
	Of Non-SDA	-.212	.098	-.162	-2.158	.033
	Informal Connectedness	.012	.004	.260	2.847	.005
	Formal Connectedness	.047	.018	.235	2.558	.012

Note. $F_{3,110} = 12.718$, $R^2_{\text{changed}} = 0.197$ and $p < 0.001$.

General Hypothesis 2 (GH2)

Congregations more connected to their communities will score higher on indicators of membership growth than those less connected with their communities. A Multiple Linear Regression was conducted to investigate this hypothesis. The overall results of GH2 were found not to be significant, with Informal, Formal, and Of Non-SDA not significant in predicting membership growth ($F_{3,111}=2.539, p=0.060$) with 6.4% of the total variance in membership growth being accounted for by these three predictors. Of these predictors, none of them accounted for a significant proportion of unique variance (see Table 14).

Table 14

Connectedness Predicting Membership Growth, Hypothesis 2.0

Variable	<i>b</i>	<i>SE B</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
(Constant)	-.076	.050		-1.514	.133
Of Non-SDA	.023	.017	.128	1.369	.174
Informal Connectedness	.000	.001	.061	.518	.605
Formal Connectedness	.004	.003	.152	1.302	.196

Note. $F_{3,111}=2.539, R^2_{\text{changed}}=0.064$ and $p=0.060$.

Specific Hypothesis 2.1 (SH 2.1)

Congregations more connected to their communities will score higher on indicators of membership growth, independent of age, than those less connected with their communities. A Multiple Linear Regression was conducted to investigate this hypothesis. The overall results of SH 2.1 were found not to be significant, with Informal,

Formal, and Of Non-SDA not significant in predicting membership growth ($F_{3,110}=2.377$, $p = 0.074$) with 5.5% of the total variance in membership growth being accounted for by these three predictors. Of these predictors, none of them accounted for a significant proportion of unique variance (see Table 15).

Specific Hypothesis 2.3 (SH 2.3)

Congregations more connected to their communities will score higher on indicators of membership growth, independent of commute time to church, than those less connected with their communities. A Multiple Linear Regression was conducted to investigate this hypothesis. The overall results of SH 2.3 were found to be significant, with Informal, Formal, and Of Non-SDA significant in predicting membership growth ($F_{3,110}=2.847$, $p = 0.041$) with 6.8% of the total variance in membership growth being accounted for by these three predictors. Of these predictors, none of them accounted for a significant proportion of unique variance (see Table 16).

Specific Hypothesis 2.4 (SH 2.4)

Congregations more connected to their communities will score higher on indicators of membership growth, independent of length of membership in the Seventh-day Adventist denomination, than those less connected with their communities. A Multiple Linear Regression was conducted to investigate this hypothesis. The overall results of SH 2.4 were found not to be significant, with Informal, Formal, and Of Non-SDA not significant in predicting membership growth ($F_{3,110}=2.596$, $p = 0.056$) with 6.6% of the total variance in membership growth being accounted for by these three predictors. Of these, none accounted for a significant proportion of unique variance (see Table 17).

Table 15

*Connectedness Predicting Membership Growth While Controlling for Age,
Hypothesis 2.1*

Model	Variable	<i>b</i>	<i>SE B</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Restricted	(Constant)	.072	.020		3.535	.001
	Age	-.012	.003	-.313	-3.497	.001
Full	(Constant)	.013	.054		.235	.814
	Age	-.012	.004	-.314	-3.387	.001
	Of Non-SDA	.005	.017	.027	.284	.777
	Informal Connectedness	.001	.001	.085	.762	.448
	Formal Connectedness	.005	.003	.165	1.475	.143

Note. $F_{3,110} = 2.377$, $R^2_{\text{changed}} = 0.055$ and $p = 0.074$.

Table 16

*Connectedness Predicting Membership Growth While Controlling for Commute Time,
Hypothesis 2.3*

Model	Variable	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Restricted	(Constant)	-.030	.013		-2.244	.027
	Commute Time	.017	.007	.222	2.418	.017
Full	(Constant)	-.088	.049		-1.788	.077
	Commute Time	.018	.007	.237	2.582	.011
	Of Non-SDA	.021	.016	.117	1.283	.202
	Informal Connectedness	.000	.001	.004	.037	.971
	Formal Connectedness	.006	.003	.212	1.817	.072

Note. $F_{3,110} = 2.847$, $R^2_{\text{changed}} = 0.068$ and $p = 0.041$.

Table 17

Connectedness Predicting Membership Growth While Controlling for Length of Denomination Membership, Hypothesis 2.4

Model	Variable	<i>b</i>	<i>SE B</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Restricted	(Constant)	.041	.056		.728	.468
	Length of Membership	-.005	.007	-.066	-.702	.484
Full	(Constant)	-.031	.073		-.431	.667
	Length of Membership	-.006	.007	-.078	-.839	.403
	Of Non-SDA	.025	.017	.138	1.463	.146
	Informal Connectedness	.000	.001	.058	.500	.618
	Formal Connectedness	.004	.003	.150	1.281	.203

Note. $F_{3,110}=2.596$, $R^2_{\text{changed}}=0.066$ and $p=0.056$.

Specific Hypothesis 2.6 (SH 2.6)

Congregations more connected with their communities will score higher on indicators of membership growth, independent of spiritual vitality, than those less connected with their communities. A Multiple Linear Regression was conducted to investigate this hypothesis. The overall results of SH 2.6 were found to be significant, with Informal, Formal, and Of Non-SDA significant in predicting membership growth ($F_{3,110}=4.327$, $p=0.006$) with 10.1% of the total variance in membership growth being accounted for by these three predictors. Of these predictors, none of them accounted for a significant proportion of unique variance (see Table 18).

Table 18

Connectedness Predicting Membership Growth While Controlling for Spiritual Vitality, Hypothesis 2.6

Model	Variable	<i>b</i>	<i>SE B</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Restricted	(Constant)	.150	.067		2.231	.028
	Spiritual Vitality	-.028	.013	-.204	-2.211	.029
Full	(Constant)	.138	.083		1.665	.099
	Spiritual Vitality	-.044	.014	-.316	-3.172	.002
	Of Non-SDA	.007	.017	.042	.442	.659
	Informal Connectedness	.001	.001	.147	1.270	.207
	Formal Connectedness	.006	.003	.215	1.883	.062

Note. $F_{3,110}=4.327$ with and $R^2_{\text{changed}}=0.101$ and a $p=0.006$.

Specific Hypothesis 2.7 (SH 2.7)

Congregations more connected with their communities will score higher on indicators of membership growth, independent of levels of volunteerism, than those less connected with their communities. A Multiple Linear Regression was conducted to investigate this hypothesis. The overall results of SH 2.7 were found to be significant, with Informal, Formal, and Of Non-SDA significant in predicting membership growth ($F_{3,110}=2.927$, $p=0.037$) with 7.1% of the total variance in membership growth being accounted for by these three predictors. Of these predictors, none of them accounted for a significant proportion of unique variance (see Table 19).

Table 19

Connectedness Predicting Membership Growth While Controlling for Levels of Volunteerism, Hypothesis 2.7

Model	Variable	<i>b</i>	<i>SE B</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Restricted	(Constant)	.050	.022		2.294	.024
	Levels of Volunteerism	-.013	.006	-.207	-2.247	.027
Full	(Constant)	-.017	.054		-.307	.760
	Levels of Volunteerism	-.014	.006	-.227	-2.474	.015
	Of Non-SDA	.017	.017	.092	.996	.322
	Informal Connectedness	.000	.001	.064	.560	.577
	Formal Connectedness	.005	.003	.189	1.635	.105

Note. $F_{3,110}=2.927$, $R^2_{\text{changed}}=0.071$ and $p=0.037$.

General Hypothesis 3 (GH3)

Congregations more connected with their communities will score higher on indicators of giving levels than those less connected with their communities. A Multiple Linear Regression was conducted to investigate this hypothesis. The overall results of GH3 were found not to be significant, with Informal, Formal, and Of Non-SDA not significant in predicting giving levels ($F_{3,111}=2.424$, $p=0.070$) with 6.1% of the total variance in giving levels being accounted for by these three predictors. Of these predictors, only Of Non-SDA accounted for a significant proportion of unique variance with $p=0.015$ (see Table 20).

Table 20

Connectedness Predicting Giving Levels, Hypothesis 3.0

Variable	<i>b</i>	<i>SE B</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
(Constant)	5.905	.649		9.105	.000
Of Non-SDA	-.542	.219	-.232	-2.471	.015
Informal Connectedness	.002	.010	.027	.229	.819
Formal Connectedness	-.027	.042	-.074	-.632	.529

Note. $F_{3,111}=2.424$, $R^2_{\text{changed}}=0.061$ and $p=0.070$.

Specific Hypothesis 3.2 (SH 3.2)

Congregations more connected to their communities will score higher on indicators of giving levels, independent of position in church, than those less connected with their communities. A Multiple Linear Regression was conducted to investigate this hypothesis. The overall results of SH 3.2 were found not to be significant, with Informal, Formal, and Of Non-SDA not significant in predicting giving levels ($F_{3,109}=2.574$, $p=0.058$) with 5.2% of the total variance in giving levels being accounted for by these three predictors. Of these predictors, only Of Non-SDA accounted for a significant proportion of unique variance with $p=0.008$ (see Table 21).

Specific Hypothesis 3.3 (SH 3.3)

Congregations more connected to their communities will score higher on indicators of giving levels, independent of commute time to church, than those less connected with their communities. A Multiple Linear Regression was conducted to

investigate this hypothesis. The overall results of SH 3.3 were found not to be significant, with Informal, Formal, and Of Non-SDA not significant in predicting giving levels ($F_{3,110}=2.572, p=0.058$) with 6.3% of the total variance in giving levels being accounted for by these three predictors. Of these predictors only Of Non-SDA accounted for a significant proportion of unique variance with $p=0.015$ (see Table 22).

Table 21

Connectedness Predicting Giving Levels While Controlling for Position in Church, Hypothesis 3.2

Model	Variable	<i>b</i>	<i>SE B</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Restricted	(Constant)	4.068	.212		19.160	.000
	Pastor	2.168	.445	.476	4.871	.000
	Officer	1.327	.277	.469	4.795	.000
Full	(Constant)	4.528	.643		7.042	.000
	Pastor	2.377	.456	.522	5.213	.000
	Officer	1.138	.281	.402	4.054	.000
	Of Non-SDA	-.563	.210	-.241	-2.681	.008
	Informal Connectedness	.010	.009	.114	1.052	.295
	Formal Connectedness	-.017	.038	-.046	-.441	.660

Note. $F_{3,109}=2.574, R^2_{\text{changed}}=0.052$ and $p=.058$.

Table 22

Connectedness Predicting Giving Levels While Controlling for Commute Time, Hypothesis 3.3

Model	Variable	<i>b</i>	<i>SE B</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Restricted	(Constant)	5.441	.176		30.916	.000
	Commute Time	-.180	.089	-.186	-2.014	.046
Full	(Constant)	6.032	.642		9.403	.000
	Commute Time	-.189	.090	-.196	-2.109	.037
	Of Non-SDA	-.521	.216	-.223	-2.409	.018
	Informal Connectedness	.006	.010	.073	.625	.533
	Formal Connectedness	-.044	.042	-.123	-1.044	.299

Note. $F_{3,110}=2.572$, $R^2_{\text{changed}}=0.063$ and $p=0.058$.

Specific Hypothesis 3.4 (SH 3.4)

Congregations more connected to their communities will score higher on indicators of giving levels, independent of length of membership in the Seventh-day Adventist denomination, than those less connected with their communities. A Multiple Linear Regression was conducted to investigate this hypothesis. The overall results of SH 3.4 were found to be significant, with Informal, Formal, and Of Non-SDA significant in predicting giving levels ($F_{3,110}=3.706$, $p = 0.014$) with 8.2% of the total variance in giving levels being accounted for by these three predictors. Of these predictors only Of Non-SDA accounted for a significant proportion of unique variance with $p = 0.012$ (see Table 23).

Table 23

Connectedness Predicting Giving Levels While Controlling for Length of Denominational Membership, Hypothesis 3.4

Model	Variable	<i>b</i>	<i>SE B</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Restricted	(Constant)	2.569	.683		3.759	.000
	Length of Membership	.332	.090	.329	3.703	.000
Full	(Constant)	3.237	.880		3.679	.000
	Length of Membership	.366	.087	.362	4.179	.000
	Of Non-SDA	-.651	.206	-.278	-3.156	.002
	Informal Connectedness	.003	.009	.037	.335	.738
	Formal Connectedness	-.023	.039	-.064	-.584	.560

Note. $F_{3,110} = 3.706$ with and $R^2_{\text{changed}} = 0.082$ and a $p = 0.014$.

Specific Hypothesis 3.5 (SH 3.5)

Congregations more connected to their communities will score higher on indicators of giving levels, independent of spiritual vitality, than those less connected with their communities. A Multiple Linear Regression was conducted to investigate this hypothesis. The overall results of SH 3.5 were found to be significant, with Informal, Formal, and Of Non-SDA significant in predicting giving levels ($F_{3,110} = 4.778$, $p = 0.004$) with 8.8% of the total variance in giving levels being accounted for by these three predictors. Of these predictors, only informal connectedness accounted for a significant proportion of unique variance with $p = 0.012$ (see Table 24).

Table 24

Connectedness Predicting Giving Levels While Controlling for Spiritual Vitality, Hypothesis 3.5

Model	Variable	<i>b</i>	<i>SE B</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Restricted	(Constant)	.498	.781		.638	.525
	Spiritual Vitality	.869	.147	.485	5.893	.000
Full	(Constant)	.856	.951		.900	.370
	Spiritual Vitality	1.033	.158	.577	6.523	.000
	Of Non-SDA	-.011	.009	-.131	-1.273	.206
	Informal Connectedness	-.068	.036	-.189	-1.859	.066
	Formal Connectedness	-.172	.195	-.073	-.879	.381

Note. $F_{3,110}=4.778$, $R^2_{\text{changed}}=0.088$ and $p=0.004$.

Summary of Quantitative Research

Chapter 4 began with preliminary analysis of data screening and reliability. Table 1 illustrated Cronbach's Alpha of Internal Reliability. The results indicated relatively good levels of internal reliability for the first three subscales, Congregational Spiritual Vitality, Formal Connectedness, and Informal Connectedness. The two remaining subscales, Monetary Giving and Levels of Volunteerism, had lower levels of internal reliability, reflecting the small amount of items used to measure these variables.

Of the three general research hypotheses, only General Hypothesis 1 was statistically significant. Hypothesis 1 stated that congregations more connected to their communities will score higher on indicators of spiritual vitality than those less connected to their communities. All specific hypotheses for Hypothesis 1 were statistically significant (see Table 25).

Hypothesis 2 was not statistically significant; however, specific hypotheses related to the general hypothesis were found to be significant when controlled for commute time, volunteerism, and congregational spiritual vitality (see Table 25).

Hypothesis 3 was not statistically significant; however, specific hypotheses related to the general hypotheses were found to be significant when controlled for length of membership in the Seventh-day Adventist denomination and congregational spiritual vitality (see Table 25).

Table 25

Summary of All General and Specific Research Hypotheses

Hypothesis #	Hypotheses	<i>p</i> -Value	Significant
1	Congregations more connected to their communities will score higher on indicators of spiritual vitality than those less connected to their communities.	<0.001	Yes
1.1	Congregations more connected to their communities will score higher on indicators of spiritual vitality, independent of age, than those less connected to their communities.	<0.001	Yes
1.2	Congregations more connected to their communities will score higher on indicators of spiritual vitality, independent of position in church, than those less connected to their communities.	<0.001	Yes
1.3	Congregations more connected to their communities will score higher on indicators of spiritual vitality, independent of time of commute to church, than those less connected to their communities.	<0.001	Yes
1.4	Congregations more connected to their communities will score higher on indicators of spiritual vitality, independent of length of membership in the Seventh-day Adventist denomination, than those less connected to their communities.	<0.001	Yes
1.5	Congregations more connected to their communities will score higher on indicators of spiritual vitality, independent of membership growth, than those less connected to their communities.	<0.001	Yes
1.6	Congregations more connected to their communities will score higher on indicators of spiritual vitality, independent of levels of monetary giving, than those less connected with their communities.	<0.001	Yes
2	Congregations more connected to their communities will score higher on indicators of membership growth than those less connected with their communities.	0.060	No
2.1	Congregations more connected to their communities will score higher on indicators of membership growth, independent of age, than those less connected with their communities.	0.074	No

Table 25—*Continued.*

Hypothesis #	Hypotheses	<i>p</i> -Value Significant	
2.2	Congregations more connected to their communities will score higher on indicators of membership growth, independent of position in church, than those less connected with their communities.	0.133	No
2.3	Congregations more connected to their communities will score higher on indicators of membership growth, independent of time of commute to church, than those less connected with their communities.	0.041	Yes
2.4	Congregations more connected to their communities will score higher on indicators of membership growth, independent of length of membership in the Seventh-day Adventist denomination, than those less connected with their communities.	0.056	No
2.5	Congregations more connected with their communities will score higher on indicators of membership growth, independent of levels of monetary giving, than those less connected with their communities.	0.174	No
2.6	Congregations more connected with their communities will score higher on indicators of membership growth, independent of spiritual vitality, than those less connected with their communities.	0.006	Yes
2.7	Congregations more connected with their communities will score higher on indicators of membership growth, independent of levels of volunteerism, than those less connected with their communities.	0.037	Yes
3	Congregations more connected with their communities will score higher on indicators of giving levels than those less connected with their communities.	0.070	No
3.1	Congregations more connected with their communities will score higher on indicators of giving levels, independent of age, than those less connected with their communities.	0.404	No
3.2	Congregations more connected to their communities will score higher on indicators of giving levels, independent of position in church, than those less connected with their communities.	0.058	No

Table 25—*Continued.*

Hypothesis #	Hypotheses	<i>p</i> -Value Significant	
3.3	Congregations more connected to their communities will score higher on indicators of giving levels, independent of time of commute to church, than those less connected with their communities.	0.058	No
3.4	Congregations more connected to their communities will score higher on indicators of giving levels, independent of length of membership in the Seventh-day Adventist denomination, than those less connected with their communities.	0.014	Yes
3.5	Congregations more connected to their communities will score higher on indicators of giving levels, independent of spiritual vitality, than those less connected with their communities.	0.004	Yes
3.6	Congregations more connected to their communities will score higher on indicators of giving levels, independent of membership growth, than those less connected with their communities.	0.200	No

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The focus of this study was to investigate the relationship of community connectedness to congregational health as demonstrated through congregational spiritual vitality, congregational growth, and congregational giving levels. This chapter provides a brief summary regarding the problem and purpose of the study, an overview of the procedures and hypotheses, conclusions and discussion of the findings, followed by implications, limitations, then recommendations and suggestions for further research, ending with a final thought.

Summary of the Study

Declining denominational growth rates in the last decade concern church leaders across the nation. This trend is seen in many Christian denominations including the Seventh-day Adventist church and the Oregon Conference. The late Donald MacGavran, founder of the church-growth movement, first started addressing these concerns in the last half of the 20th century (Conn, 1997, p. 18). Increased church growth was attempted through adhering to principles discovered through scientific studies, such as the Natural Church Development (Schwarz, 1996). Toward the end of the century, Warren, Hybels, and others advocated increasing church involvement in community affairs, which seemed to lead to increased church growth and vitality (Stetzer, 2008, pp. 12, 13).

A study done by Woolever and Bruce (2002) identified lack of community involvement as a characteristic true of Christian churches, particularly the Seventh-day Adventist church (R. L. Dudley, 2006a). Though Adventists have officially attempted to maintain a value system which includes compassionate community involvement, members are also warned to consider the negative effects of familiarity with people outside the influence of the church. This warning has been heeded faithfully, resulting in many members having little or no meaningful social interaction with anyone other than fellow church members. Thus, even though Adventists have invested countless dollars, salaries, and resources into formal reaping evangelism programs, the traditional practice of separatism may unintentionally contribute to stagnant church growth and vitality of the Adventist church in the United States.

Biblical injunction clearly invokes compassionate ministry as a duty of every Christian (Matt 23:23, 24; Isa 58). Anecdotal evidence implies a positive relationship between community connectedness and church health, a position supported by White (1909b, p. 189). However, little statistical research has been done to substantiate this evidence. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to discover if a relationship existed between levels of community involvement and the health of a church as shown through increased congregational spiritual vitality, church growth, and giving levels.

Procedures

The investigator could not find a research instrument which measured the relationship of community connectedness to church health, therefore a scale was developed for this study to measure the relationship between congregational health and community connectedness. To achieve validity and reliability, the scale was built by

compiling items, obtaining feedback from an expert panel of judges, and then piloting the approved survey to a small group, followed by administering the questionnaire to the sample population. It must be remembered that because of the very nature of ex-post-facto research, internal validity is never excellent, therefore causation cannot be inferred (I. Newman & Benz, 1998, p. 129).

The sample consisted of members of English-speaking churches and companies in the Oregon Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. Following the protocol for ex-post-facto research, a subset of members was selected by stratified random sampling who matched a common variable, that of attending church an average of 2 out of 4 weeks each month.

A total of 7,840 surveys were distributed to members in 121 congregations. Members in 116 churches returned a total of 3,408 questionnaires, achieving a response rate of 43% for individuals and 97% for congregations. Individual member scores were compiled to form aggregate church scores, thus changing $N=3,408$ to $N=116$. Church scores were compared to church records in the area of church growth. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics of means, standard deviations, percentages, and correlations. The research hypotheses were evaluated using multiple linear regressions.

The Research Hypotheses

The three general research hypotheses were:

1. Congregations more connected to their communities will score higher on indicators of congregational spiritual vitality than those less connected to their communities when one controls for age, position in church, commute time to church, length of membership, membership growth, and monetary giving.

2. Congregations more connected to their communities will score higher on indicators of membership growth than those less connected with their communities when one controls for age, position in church, commute time to church, length of membership, monetary giving, congregational spiritual vitality, and levels of volunteerism.

3. Congregations more connected with their communities will score higher on indicators of giving levels than those less connected with their communities when one controls for age, position in church, commute time to church, length of membership, congregational spiritual vitality, and membership growth.

Conclusions and Discussion

This section is organized by general and specific research hypotheses. In each category, conclusions and discussion will be presented for those hypotheses that were significant, followed by those that approached significance, if helpful for discussion and implications.

First Hypothesis (H1.0 – H1.6)

The first general hypothesis and the associated specific hypotheses summarized research question 1 and were found to be significant in this study. These hypotheses indicate a positive relationship between community connectedness and the spiritual vitality of a congregation.

Community connectedness included both informal and formal connections of the church members. Formal connections were identified as organized activities of volunteer involvement, and informal connections were identified by a wide variety of spontaneous or non-structured times of neighborhood or community involvement.

Indicators of spiritual vitality were items relating to members' personal spiritual experience (private spirituality), their organizational religiousness (public displays of religiosity), and commitment (as shown by levels of monetary giving and volunteerism to the church).

The positive relationship between the spiritual vitality of a congregation and their connections to the community was not found to be influenced by any of the other variables used in the study, such as age, position in church, commute time to church, length of membership, membership growth, or monetary giving.

The findings for general and specific research hypotheses H1.0 – 1.6 were as predicted. These findings support the anecdotal and biblical evidence found in Matt 23:23, 24 and Isa 58, which indicate a positive relationship between helping one's neighbor and spiritual health (Stetzer, 2008, pp. 12, 13). These findings are also supported by White (1909b) who states, "Our religious experience will strengthen as we bring it into the daily life" (p. 194).

In addition, other analyses have been run to help inform the researcher about relationships other than those hypothesized. As one can see from the correlation matrix (see Appendix E), significant positive relationships were found between formal connectedness and spiritual vitality ($r = .313, p = <.001$) and informal connectedness and spiritual vitality ($r = .271, p = <.001$), suggesting that people who are more connected in their communities have more spiritual vitality. These connections may be through formal volunteer activities for non-church charities or through informal personal connections with the community.

Commute time was found to be negatively correlated with spiritual vitality ($r = -.230, p = <.05$), suggesting that members' longer commute times may detract from the spiritual vitality of the church (see Appendix E). These findings are substantiated by literature which points to the practice of commuting to work as having a correlation to less connectedness in the community (M. Adams, 2005; Putnam, 2000).

Research questions 4-6 asked related questions to the first general hypothesis. In addition to predicting a relationship between community connectedness and spiritual vitality, the research questions asked if there was a relationship between congregational spiritual vitality and church growth, monetary giving, and volunteerism.

Membership growth was found to be negatively correlated with spiritual vitality ($r = -.203, p = <.05$), possibly suggesting that the growth of a church may be negatively related to higher levels of spiritual vitality (see Appendix E). These findings will be explained more fully in discussion dealing with specific hypothesis H 2.6.

Spiritual vitality was found to be positively correlated with both monetary giving ($r = .485, p = <.01$) and volunteerism in the local church ($r = .588, p = <.01$) (see Appendix E). The positive correlation between monetary giving and spiritual vitality may reflect the positive correlation between monetary giving and age ($r = .413, p = <.01$), and spiritual vitality and age ($r = .331, p = <.01$) suggesting that older members give more and also have more spiritual vitality. These findings should be interpreted with caution, however, since monetary giving and volunteerism were both used as indicators of spiritual vitality.

Second Hypothesis (H2.0 – H2.7)

The second general hypothesis and the associated specific hypotheses summarized research question 2 and predicted a positive relationship between community connectedness and the growth of a congregation. Church growth was measured by congregational decadal growth figures supplied by the Oregon Conference. These figures were adjusted for death, apostasy, and missing members, then were averaged to determine the trend of church growth for each congregation represented in the study. This hypothesis approached significance ($p = .06$).

Literature is mixed on this subject. On one hand, these findings are contrary to White (1909c), who suggests that if members were dealing kindly and courteously with their neighbors there would be “one hundred conversions to the truth where now there is only one” (p. 189). On the other hand, Metzger (2007) postulates that most members do not wish to make the personal sacrifice required to live a life of selfless connections, therefore churches that promote this practice will not grow (pp. 50, 51). In a qualitative study on mainline churches that practiced intentional hospitality, among other disciplines, Bass (2007) found that some churches were growing and others were not (p. 305).

Three specific hypotheses, however, did achieve significance. They predicted a positive relationship between community connectedness and growth when controlled for commute time, volunteerism, and spiritual vitality.

Commute Time (SH 2.3)

It was found that greater congregational growth is related to congregations more connected to their communities when controlled for the amount of time it takes members to travel to church. This would indicate that growth is not independent of commute time.

Further analysis confirms this. As shown in the correlation matrix (see Appendix E) commute time is negatively correlated with age ($r = -.331, p = <.001$), thus suggesting that younger people spend more time traveling to church.

At this point it is helpful to consider two other specific hypotheses (SH 2.1 and SH 2.4), both of which closely approached significance. These specific hypotheses predicted a positive relationship between community connections and growth when controlled for age and length of time members have belonged to the denomination. These nearly significant hypotheses are illuminated by further testing, which reveals that length of membership is positively correlated for age ($r = .257, p = <.001$) and age is negatively correlated with membership growth ($r = -.312, p = <.001$). Thus, the longer a person has been in the denomination, the more likely they are to be older, and the older the average age of the members, the less church growth is demonstrated.

Age and commute are negatively correlated, as already noted above. Therefore growth may not be independent of commute time because of the close relationship between commute time and age or length of denominational membership of church members. Literature confirms that younger churches tend to be growing (Hadaway, 2006, p. 2).

The amount of unchurched friends one has is described as an important factor for church growth (W. Arn, 1987, p. 52; Hunter, 1986, p. 72); however, unchurched friends and family were measured as a portion of community connectedness in this study, not separately.

Volunteerism (SH 2.7)

This specific hypothesis predicted that congregations more connected in their communities will experience growth when controlled for volunteerism in the church. This was found to be significant, thus growth is not independent of volunteerism.

Again, by examining the correlation matrix (see Appendix E), we find additional information. Interestingly, membership growth is negatively correlated with levels of volunteerism ($r = -.206, p = <.05$), indicating that larger churches do not necessarily enjoy higher levels of volunteering, a finding supported by White (1909d, pp. 114, 115).

Alternately, membership growth is positively correlated with formal connectedness ($r = .212, p = <.05$), suggesting that church membership may grow when more members donate time to organizations outside the congregation. This is supported by the research of Sahlin (2003) and opinions of Rick Warren, Bill Hybels, and others that a positive relationship exists between community involvement and church growth (Stetzer, 2008, pp. 12, 13; White, 1909b, p. 16).

Congregational Spiritual Vitality (SH 2.6)

This specific hypothesis predicted a relationship between community connectedness and growth when controlled for congregational spiritual vitality and was found to be significant. Growth is not independent of congregational spiritual vitality. This supports the findings of Woolever and Bruce (2004) who discovered that churches with high levels of spiritual vitality were not always growing, thus prompting them to caution against using growth as a important indicator of church health (p. 113).

Again, by examining the correlation matrix (see Appendix E), we find additional information. Membership growth is slightly negatively correlated to spiritual vitality

($r = -.203$, $p = <.05$). The implication is that congregations which achieve greater growth may become plagued with lower levels of spiritual vitality, as suggested by White (1909b, pp. 114, 115).

The correlation matrix also shows a positive relationship between congregational spiritual vitality and age ($r = .331$, $p = <.05$) and an inverse relationship between age and growth ($r = -0.312$, $p = <.01$). Older people tend to have more spiritual vitality, but churches with higher percentages of older members are not as apt to be growing, as pointed out by Hadaway (2006, p. 2).

A possible consideration for this may be to wonder if this relationship might be a curvilinear relationship; as growth increases, spiritual vitality increases until growth reaches a certain point after which levels of spiritual vitality may begin to drop. There is some theoretical support for this phenomenon in literature. McIntosh (2009a, 2009b) advises churches to adopt the model of small groups within large churches in order to maintain vibrancy. In earlier literature, instead of forming small groups within a large church, White (1909a) advises members not to join large churches. She recommends establishing additional smaller churches to effectively address the challenges of lower levels of volunteerism and lower levels of congregational spiritual vitality sometimes found in larger churches (p. 244).

Third Hypothesis (H3.0-H3.6)

The third general hypothesis and the associated specific hypotheses summarized research question 3 and predicted a positive relationship between community connectedness and the giving levels of a congregation. Giving levels were measured by

the amount of volunteer hours and monetary gifts members gave to the church. This hypothesis approached significance ($p = .07$).

However, two specific hypotheses (SH 3.4 and SH 3.5) did achieve significance. They predicted a positive relationship between community connectedness and giving levels when controlled for length of membership in the Seventh-day Adventist denomination and when controlled for congregational spiritual vitality.

Length of Membership in the Denomination (SH 3.4)

This specific hypothesis predicted a relationship between community connectedness and giving when controlled for length of membership in the denomination and was found to be significant. Giving levels are not independent of the length of time members have belonged to the denomination.

Again, the correlational matrix (see Appendix E) sheds light on this finding. As discussed earlier the longer a person has been a member of the denomination, the more likely they are to be older, and age has a significant positive relationship with monetary giving ($r = .413, p = <.01$). Wiepking and Mass (2009) confirm the relationship between age and charitable giving, especially for people who attend church (p. 1986). This is consistent with literature which confirms that Christians tend to be generous (Bruce, 2004), however, other studies found that tithing according to the biblical understanding of 10% or more was practiced by fewer than one in five (19%) Christians in the United States (Woolever & Bruce, 2002, p. 41).

This is supported by Specific Hypothesis 3.3, which closely approached significance ($p = .058$). This hypothesis predicted a relationship between community connectedness and higher giving levels when controlled for commute time. It was found

that shorter commute times were nearly significant in predicting a relationship between connectedness and higher giving levels. As discussed earlier, older members are more likely to have shorter commute times. This might be because older members may be less likely to drive longer distances, especially at night, or they may still reside in older homes located closer to the church.

Congregational Spiritual Vitality (SH 3.5)

This specific hypothesis predicted a relationship between community connectedness and giving when controlled for congregational spiritual vitality and was found to be significant. Giving levels are not independent of congregational spiritual vitality. This is contrary to literature which shows that giving is reciprocal, which generates even more giving. Proverbs 11:25 reads, “A generous man will prosper; he who refreshes others will himself be refreshed” (Post, 2007b).

Again, from the correlational matrix (see Appendix E), we find that congregational spiritual vitality is positively correlated for age ($r = .331, p = <.01$). This implies that, since both length of membership (as mentioned above) and spiritual vitality are positively correlated for age, age factors may affect the relationship of connectedness to giving levels.

Results of this study, according to the correlational matrix (see Appendix E), show a positive relationship between spiritual vitality and monetary giving ($r = .485, p = .01$) and spiritual vitality and volunteerism ($r = .588, p = .01$). Giving time and money will build commitment and increase spiritual vitality, as stated in Matt 6:21, “Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.” The results imply that, even though spiritual vitality may appear to negatively affect giving levels of churches that are

more connected, it may be due more to factors influenced by age. Church leaders may need to take this into account as they encourage all members to give more generously.

As discussed earlier about spiritual vitality and congregational growth, there may be a curvilinear effect between congregational spiritual vitality and giving levels. As churches grow past a certain point, their congregational vitality may lessen and giving may recede. This discussion is supported by noting the significant inverse relationship found in the correlation matrix (see Appendix E) between membership growth and levels of monetary giving ($r = -.332, p = <.001$). While larger churches often seem to have more resources, the proportion of income donated may drop as members feel less need to give sacrificially to keep the church viable.

It should also be noted that there may be some error in prediction for this hypothesis because giving levels are comprised of two of the indicators of spiritual vitality: monetary giving and volunteerism.

Implications

The results of this study indicate there is a relationship between congregational connectedness in the community and increased congregational spiritual vitality. This relationship is independent of age, position in the church, time it takes to commute to church, how long a person has been a member of the Seventh-day Adventist denomination, how much the church is growing, or how much money is given to the church. Both formal and informal connectedness seem to enhance this relationship. Members are often urged to give formal volunteer time in their local community services. These results seem to indicate that members should also be encouraged to spend time volunteering with community organizations and to foster informal connections with

neighbors and community members. This study shows that increasing these connections may positively relate to the congregational spiritual vitality of the church.

Results of this study also predict a positive relationship between connectedness and increased membership growth when controlled for time to commute to church, volunteering for the church, and congregational spiritual vitality. Growing churches tend to have a younger average age and younger members tend to have longer commute times to church. Longer commute times predicted greater growth because younger members help the church grow.

Inverse relationships between growth and volunteering for the church and growth and congregational spiritual vitality may indicate a tendency toward membership congregational myopia, which may be balanced by a greater emphasis on getting members connected in their communities. Greater levels of volunteering in and for the church may result in members concentrating on the needs and programs of the church to the exclusion of the needs of the community.

Furthermore, results of this study predict a positive relationship between connectedness and increased giving levels (both monetary and time to the church) when length of membership in the denomination and congregational spiritual vitality are controlled. These results imply that those members longer in the denomination are essential to supporting the work of the church and should be recognized for their foundational stability. One may infer that younger congregations may experience higher levels of spiritual vitality if encouraged to increase their levels of commitment through giving time and finances.

Limitations

Conducting a survey of this size and scope takes a great deal of resources. Though funding was graciously supplied by the Oregon Conference, the level of support for a study of this size in a professional research environment would have been much greater. Further funding is necessary to analyze the large amount of data originated from this study.

Unfortunately no previous benchmarks exist to compare congregational connectedness. Pastors, members, and administrators will ask how their church(es) match up to standards of connectedness. These standards will not be available until like studies are done in other congregations. In the meantime, rankings of existing church scores indicate where each church stands in relation to the other churches in the study.

A difficulty encountered in this study was integrating church records as part of the data analyzed for the study. Though church records were accurate, utilizing records compiled longitudinally before the study was conceived created some barriers in the amount of useable information available for the study.

One limitation which arose between the time the survey was developed and when it was administered was an unexpected economic downturn. This may have affected some of the responses dealing with monetary giving and reporting family income. Church records reflected extreme changes in the tithe levels, with the average church involved in the study showing a loss of \$12,932.79 in tithe donations for 2009.

Though the survey was completely voluntary and anonymous, anxiety from several members was expressed about two parts of the questionnaire: anonymity (an identifying church code was put on each survey which some felt might compromise their privacy) and financial information (some felt this was private information not germane to

the study). These concerns may have resulted in less cooperation from the sample population. Unfortunately, two members indicated an unwillingness to return to church after receiving this survey.

Several members also expressed various levels of irritation, sadness, or guilt at their perceived inability to measure up to what they thought would be the best way to complete the survey, specifically items 41 and 42, which measured informal and formal connections. Some indicated they were hindered by age, some by health, some by having never made connecting a priority, but all were distressed by the answers they felt compelled to give. Perhaps this group of members is represented by some of those in Matt 25:37-39 who do not remember doing good works. Or perhaps this survey encouraged others to adopt compassionate connecting as a new way of daily life. In any case, as is described above, this survey generated a surprising amount of emotional response from the respondents.

Recommendations for Practice

The research results generated from this study contribute to the literature and research of the effects of community connectedness on congregations. Several recommendations for practice resulting from this research will be useful to administrators, educators, pastors, and lay members of congregations. This study contributes to a better understanding of congregations and community connections that are related to current Seventh-day Adventist denominational practices of community connectedness and traditional evangelism, the demographic impact of the church on church growth and giving levels, and the types of congregational community connections important to congregational spiritual vitality.

This study was conducted in the Oregon Conference, therefore the recommendations made affect the conference but encompass wider concentric circles of administrative and educational jurisdictions of which the conference is a member. Recommendations made at these levels greatly enhance the ability of a local conference to adopt recommendations or make changes.

According to Oregon Conference records, membership in English-speaking churches over the past 10 years is stable. There are as many people being baptized or transferring into the churches as there are members who are dying, apostatizing, or missing. In other words, there has been no membership growth in English-speaking churches in the Oregon Conference in the last 10 years; membership is staying flat.

These statistics reflect statistics of other conferences, other denominations, and the Christian church worldwide. This is in spite of years of focusing time, human resources, and dollars on formal evangelistic programs both at the local church level and worldwide. Emphasis has been placed on sharing one's faith in every arena, from personal one-on-one contact to sending missionaries into foreign lands.

The results of this study indicate that congregations encouraged to increase community connectedness have higher rates of congregational spiritual vitality. Encouraging members to connect compassionately with their neighbors, though never discouraged, has been of secondary importance. Even less attention has been given to connecting compassionately outside of any formal program. While it is generally considered a good idea to live caringly, living lives of intentional caring has not been given as much study or emphasis.

Incorporating connections into the thinking and practices of a denomination is a systemic issue and includes a church-wide paradigm shift. The millennials in our congregations are not as much interested in new programs or plans that will boost church membership or even have a positive impact on the church. They are interested in what makes a difference, what matches their value systems. This survey studied a way of life, not a program, therefore using the results of this study to establish an additional program will not effectively address this paradigm shift or meet the needs of the young adults in our churches.

The following recommendations can be implemented simultaneously or separately and are not intended to encourage either top-down or grass-roots movements.

1. Study the Concept Holistically. Because of the strong relationship shown in the first hypothesis between community connectedness and congregational spiritual vitality, it would be well for the denomination to set aside personnel, time, and resources to reawaken our understanding of the vast amount of biblical and extra-biblical literature relating to compassion as a way of life. Scholars and theologians could be tasked with reading and analyzing this literature and the host of extra-biblical literature available. Particular attention could be given to Isa 58, Heb 13:15-16, Eph 2:10, parables of Jesus, such as the Sheep and the Goats (Matt 25:31-46), the parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37), and the parable of the ten virgins (Matt 25:1-13). Other church teachings to study include the ordinance of humility and the biblical fix given to the Laodicean church.

These concepts need further study and development by the world-wide church. But study is only the first step. According to Shirky (2008), paradigm shifts and practices

change only when new behavior is adopted unilaterally. Therefore, the next recommendations may be implemented in any order, or all at once, among all groups of people.

2. Educate Members and Leaders at All Levels. The second recommendation arising from the results of this study showing a relationship between congregational spiritual vitality and community connectedness is to include higher education compassion training in several disciplines (most notably social work, education, pre-med, medical, nursing, and pastoral training); build connectedness training into Bible class curriculum at all grade levels; and provide sermon materials and other helps for congregations. High schools, colleges, and universities across the nation have added classes on altruistic love and the sciences. Some of these include Belize Christian Academy, Southwest Baptist University, Boston College, Northwest Nazarene University, Fuller Theological Seminary, Bethel Theological Seminary, and California State University Chico (Post, 2007a).

3. Consider the Demographic Impacts. Age was found to be an important consideration in several areas of this study, most notably negatively impacting the ability of the church to grow. This is important information considering the average age of the sample of members from Oregon Conference congregations (55-64 years) in conjunction with the advance of the average age of the population.

As baby boomers grow older, this “age wave” referred to by Charles Arn and Win Arn (1999, 2004) will have an unprecedented impact on the church. This trend affects both those advancing in years and those who provide care, sometimes to children as well as parents, and will provide opportunities and challenges for churches.

Opportunities will arise for increased compassionate caring, but challenges will come to church growth, giving levels, and congregational spiritual vitality, as noted in this research.

Charles Arn and Win Arn (1999) urge congregations to consider new paradigms that embrace seniors as a source of volunteers and caregivers, whose new retirement motive is not just to play, but to work, learn, serve, and play (p. 13). Reporting on a national research study of senior adult conversions, Charles Arn (2003) recommends that churches respond to the felt needs of seniors for more spirituality through intentional connecting and evangelizing. Additional human and monetary resources should be allocated to respond to this unprecedented shift in demographics.

4. Practice Holistic Evangelism. The growth rate is flat for English-speaking churches of the Oregon Conference and for the North American Seventh-day Adventist denomination. The results of this study indicate that all churches score higher on spiritual vitality when they are more connected with their communities. Therefore it is recommended that a holistic approach to evangelism be adopted which equally emphasizes compassionate connections and formal Bible study, including traditional evangelism. White (1942) describes holistic evangelism as mingling compassionately with people, showing sympathy for them, helping them and winning their trust, then calling them to follow Jesus. According to White, holistic evangelism must happen in that order and is the only type of soul-winning likely to achieve true success (p. 143). Incorporating more intentional holistic evangelism may require restructuring administrative configurations and reallocating human and monetary resources to support this recommendation.

5. *Embrace Holistic Evangelism in the Pacific Northwest.* The findings of this study are good news for the Oregon Conference. These results show there is a relationship between congregational connectedness and growth when controlled for age factors. The results of this study give credence to the viability of encouraging members, young and old, to make as many genuine community connections as possible. The Pacific Northwest is historically a place where people pride themselves on being spiritual but not religious. They are an independent people, rugged, earth-lovers, and prone to distrust government and each other. Neighbors are much more likely to open their doors to people they know, even casually. A genuinely kind, caring neighbor, without an agenda other than to love unselfishly, is often the only connection that people will allow to organized religiosity. Even as Oregon and America become less connected, a deep longing for community and spirituality makes it even more important to reach out compassionately. Reaching out flies in the face of our culture of isolation and it takes time (Lovenheim, 2010, pp. 41, 110). Helping members become more connected in their communities is a holistic evangelism technique endorsed by White (1909b). She states enthusiastically that if church members were more compassionately connected with their neighbors there would be a hundredfold increase in baptisms (p. 189).

6. *Plan Intentional Church Growth Strategies.* Data indicate less congregational spirituality as a church grows, therefore it is important that pastors and congregations take extra effort to study ways to support expansion (i.e., create small groups, spawn new congregations, etc.) while not losing congregational spiritual vitality. If they do nothing, according to the results of this study, they are likely to lose that vitality.

Recommendations for Further Study

Though the results from this study are intriguing, they do not establish causality. Because of lack of comparative data, more studies are needed to confirm the findings of this research. Relationships have been identified, but further testing through experimental, longitudinal, and qualitative research is necessary to establish external validity. Comparative testing would establish benchmarks of congregational community connectedness, a measurement that some feel would be helpful. Acquiring adequate funding would be necessary to study this subject over a period of years in longitudinal or experimental settings.

1. An area of interest not studied is to determine if churches with higher levels of connectedness retain their members more consistently than those with lower levels of connectedness. This would require a longitudinal study establishing retention rates over time as well as doing post surveys of those who left.

2. The impact of the pastor upon the level of congregational connectedness was not studied as part of the design of the research. Seventh-day Adventist pastors are moved periodically to different congregations. It was the intent of this study to discover the effect of members' community connections upon the congregation, without controlling for the ebb and flow of pastoral influence. Byrd (2009), in describing what he considers "contemporary evangelism for the 21st century," asserts that "the local church pastor is not solely called to pastor the church, but rather called to pastor the community" (p. 89). Knowledge would be enhanced by studying how much a pastor's influence may affect levels of community connectedness, spiritual vitality, church growth, giving levels, and other factors of congregational health.

3. Other explorations which would enhance the research already conducted would be studies to determine if there are curvilinear relationships between spiritual vitality and growth, spiritual vitality and giving levels, formal community connectedness and spiritual vitality, informal community connectedness and spiritual vitality.

4. No attempt was made to measure social service volunteer time within the church other than asking how much time was given to the church. It would be helpful to understand if a relationship exists between volunteering in a church ministry that meets significant amounts of community members and spiritual vitality. The study would need to control for number of hours of operation, and number of people served versus the number of volunteer hours given to achieve a true measurement.

5. It would be well to study how many members must be actively connected with the community in compassionate love before it affects the congregation, how many connections does it take before the congregation feels the effects, and is there a tipping point, as described by Gladwell (2002, p. 9)?

6. Because of the impact of age factors on the relationship between community connectedness and growth and giving levels as shown by this study, it would be helpful to determine if relationships exist between congregational community connectedness and growth, and congregational community connectedness and giving levels when controlled for the age factors combined: age, length of denominational membership, and commute time.

7. Including qualitative research in the study of this topic would allow for a broader picture which might give insight to motivation and rewards experienced by those who demonstrate a lifestyle of compassionate love.

8. Exploring the concept of community connections in other cultures would inform additional language groups.

9. Because of mixed literature on the relationships of spiritual vitality and church growth, further studies should be done to discover if the findings of this study are replicated.

10. Not all researchers use a theoretical base when discussing the social ministry role of congregations to their communities. Those who do often refer to sociological theories, especially those dealing with loneliness, individualism, and social capital such as Putnam, Lewis Killian, and Roozen (Ammerman, 2001; Baggett, 2002; de Groot, 2006; Fey et al., 2006; W. M. Newman & D'Antonio, 1978; Woolever et al., 2006). Additonal insight may be obtained by examining connections within the context of sociological relational theories.

A Final Thought

A famous and well-loved picture painted by Warner Sallman (Anderson University, 2010) shows Jesus standing at a door, patiently knocking. The picture, titled “Christ at Heart’s Door” and based on Rev 3:20, symbolizes Jesus asking for entrance into our hearts and lives. This verse comes after an unflattering description of the works of God’s church as being “neither cold nor hot.” Jesus openly wishes the church were “either one or the other” (Rev 3:15), then prescribes the antidote for this condition: “buy from me gold, . . . white clothes, . . . and salve” (Rev 3:18). Bible scholars (Nichol, Cottrel, Neufeld, & Neuffer, 1957) interpret *gold* to mean faith shown by “expressing itself through love” (Gal 5:6). *White clothes* refers to Christ’s righteousness and *salve* refers to the Holy Spirit to help us see ourselves in our true condition. The message is

addressed to the Laodicean church, the last of seven churches mentioned in the first three chapters of Revelation and is a message commonly believed to be speaking directly to Christians living today (pp. 761, 762). The message to the Laodiceans (Rev 3:14-22) has some interesting parallels to this research project.

This study revealed that fewer than 5 out of 10 members (46%) volunteer for or with their communities, and just 5 out of 10 (50%) meaningfully connect informally with non-churched family or friends. Stearns (2010) describes the condition of Christians living religiously without connecting to our communities as having a “hole in our Gospel” (p. 22). This study did not show we are doing no connecting, just not as much as we could. We are neither cold nor hot. Jesus asks us to express ourselves through love by living lives showing we have donned the robe of Christ’s righteousness and He sent the Holy Spirit to help us with this.

This study was of congregations, but in order to investigate churches, it was necessary to measure the habits of members. The message to the Laodiceans is a message calling the church to do things differently, but it is also a personal message. The picture is of Christ standing on the outside, the outside of a church, and also the outside of our hearts. He says, “Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me” (Rev 3:20). He wants to come in. This is a clarion call to God’s people at this time in history to change the priorities in our personal and congregational lives.

The Laodicean message has often been regarded as bad news, but if understood as a message calling people to do works of compassionate love, it becomes good news. Even more good news is that while the call has deep spiritual implications, yet it is

simple, and if obeyed, brings great blessings. In this call, as Byrd (2009) notes, we are given the privilege to help ourselves by helping others (p. 94). And those who respond to the call receive still greater good news, for to those who overcome, Jesus promises “the right to sit with me on my throne” (Rev 3:21).

Many years ago angels came to Earth with good news. Today, in Rev 3:14-22, the Bible brings us good news. The message to Laodicea can be received as joyfully as the shepherds received the words of the heavenly angels, “Do not be afraid, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people” (Luke 2:15).

APPENDIX A

EXPERT PANEL MEMBERS AND TABLE OF SPECIFICATIONS TALLY

Expert Panel Members and Table of Specifications Tally

Five persons were chosen to serve on the content expert panel for the development of this survey. It was the purpose of this panel to rank select survey questions which adequately covered the topic. Each panel member was asked to indicate which questions they felt best measured the variables studied. Questions included in the survey were selected by at least 80% of the panel members. A description of the members is presented followed by the tally of question selection.

Expert Panel Members

May-Ellen Colón, Ph.D.

May-Ellen Netten Colón is an Assistant Director of the General Conference Sabbath School and Personal Ministries Department and Director of Adventist Community Services International. Previously a missionary to Africa and the former Soviet Union, she enjoys visiting other cultures with her work-related international travel.

Gaspar Colón, Ph.D.

Dr. Colón is Dean of the School of Arts and Social Sciences and is Professor of Religion at Washington Adventist University (WAU). He is also Director of the Center for Metropolitan Ministry. He has previous experience working as Interim President of Washington Adventist University and for the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA). Dr. Colón has worked in humanitarian services in Africa and the former Soviet Union.

Al Reimche, B.A.

Al Reimche is President of the Oregon Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. He served as a teacher and departmental director in Newfoundland and Alberta Seventh-day Adventist Conferences in Canada. In 2001, Al was invited to serve as the Vice President for Administration in Oregon, and became president of the Oregon Conference of Seventh-day Adventists in 2009. Al brings a rich background of pastoral history and research along with a deep understanding of the members of the Oregon Conference to the process of developing a survey appropriate to the needs of the Oregon Conference members and Administration.

Monte Sahlin, MCMH

Monte Sahlin is a consultant for Center for Creative Ministry. His master's degree in Community Mental Health has qualified him to hold leadership positions in more than 100 nonprofit and/or religious entities. He is an adjunct faculty member of Urban Studies at Campolo Graduate School at Eastern University and the adjunct instructor for Field Research in Ministry in the Doctor of Ministry program at Andrews University. He currently serves on the steering committee of the Cooperative Congregational Studies Partnership, a large, interfaith research project on American religion based at Hartford Seminary.

Sharon Pittman, Ph.D.

Dr. Pittman is professor and MSW Program Director at the University of Texas-Pan American. In recent years she has taught in Peru, Costa Rica, Thailand, Kenya, Mexico and Italy. She is also an international development practitioner with Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) and Global Humanitarian Outreach. She has

served as an academic administrator and professor at Andrews University and Walla Walla University. Dr. Pittman is currently engaged in sociology research at the University of Texas-Pan American.

Table of Specifications Tally

Directions for the expert panel:

You have been identified as an expert in the areas of community connections and/or congregational health. I'm interested in studying the relationship of congregational growth, spiritual vitality and giving levels to a members' connectedness in their community.

The following sets of items were identified based upon a review of the literature and my phenomenological beliefs. You are being asked to evaluate the perceived relevance of these items for the purpose of the research stated above from your expert viewpoint.

Instructions are provided in the table regarding how to mark the items along with space for items you may wish to suggest for inclusion in this study.

Table of Specifications**

Please mark the box(es) corresponding to any and all variables measured by each question.

Item	Healthy Individual Community Connectedness Variables		Congregational Health Variables		
	Formal Connectedness	Informal Connectedness	Spiritual Experience	Organizational Religiousness*	Commitment*
I feel God's presence.		20%	100%		
I feel deep inner peace or harmony.		20%	100%		
I feel God's love for me, directly or through others		40%	100%	20%	
I am spiritually touched by the beauty of creation		20%	100%		20%
I desire to be closer or in union with God.		20%	100%	20%	20%
In general, how close to God do you feel?		20%	100%		
As I grow older my understanding of God changes	20%	20%	100%		
Over the last year, how have you grown in your faith?		40%	100%	40%	40%
<i>Possible additional item ideas:</i>					
<i>I desire to show my faith by my unselfish works (James 2:18)</i>					
<i>I desire to do unselfish works because I am saved, not in order to be saved. (Motivation is a spiritual issue)</i>					
The events in my life unfold according to a divine or greater plan.	20%	20%	80%		
I have a sense of mission or calling in my own life.		80%	80%	20%	60%
<i>Possible additional item idea: I desire to introduce people in my community to Jesus. (This is a major spiritual issue.)</i>					
How often do you pray privately in places other than at church?	40%		100%		20%
<i>Possible additional item idea: I pray for other people's needs and not just my own.</i>					
I consider myself a religious person.	20%		80%	20%	
I consider myself a spiritual person.			80%		

Table of Specifications**

Please mark the box(es) corresponding to any and all variables measured by each question.

Item	Healthy Individual Community Connectedness Variables		Congregational Health Variables		
	Formal Connectedness	Informal Connectedness	Spiritual Experience	Organizational Religiousness*	Commitment*
How often do you watch or listen to religious programs on TV, radio or Internet?	40%	20%	60%	40%	
How often do you read the Bible or other religious literature?	40%		80%	20%	
<i>Possible additional item ideas:</i>					
<i>I cherish my biblical beliefs.</i>					
<i>I desire to live out the biblical beliefs that I know.</i>					
I spend time in small group fellowship.	40%	20%	40%	80%	60%
I attend weekly worship services.	40%	20%	40%	60%	60%
<i>Additional item: I attend other church meetings, such as mid-week prayer meeting, vespers, etc.</i>					
<i>Duplicate—use “Out of the last four Sabbaths, how many times did you attend church?”</i>					
Do you hold a church office or other position of service?	40%		40%	60%	60%
Out of the last four Sabbaths, how many times did you attend church? (as in worship service?)	40%		40%	80%	60%
<i>Additional item: Out of the last four Sabbaths, how many times did you attend Sabbath School? (An important factor—so many folks attend church, but not Sabbath School)</i>					
How often do you serve your church in teaching, church project leadership or other responsibilities?	40%		40%	40%	60%
I give large amounts of time and money to help others.	20%	40%	40%		60%
In an average week, how many unpaid hours do you spend in activities on behalf of your church?	40%		40%		60%
In an average week, how many hours do you spend helping	20%	80%	60%		40%

Table of Specifications**

Please mark the box(es) corresponding to any and all variables measured by each question.

Item	Healthy Individual Community Connectedness Variables		Congregational Health Variables		
	Formal Connectedness	Informal Connectedness	Spiritual Experience	Organizational Religiousness*	Commitment*
people not in your church, outside of any volunteer or paid professional role or structured program?					
How much of your annual income do you give to your local church?	40%		60%	40%	80%
During the last year what percent of your annual income did you give as tithe?	20%		60%	40%	80%
Do you ever give tithe to organizations other than your own local church?			Do Not Mark in This Row		
Another local church	40%		20%	20%	80%
My local conference, bypassing the church	40%			20%	80%
Another local conference	40%			20%	80%
My union or the General Conference	40%		20%	20%	80%
Overseas denominational organizations	40%		20%	20%	80%
SDA denominational radio, TV and Internet ministries	40%		20%	20%	80%
Other <i>SDA OR NON-SDA CHURCH?</i> <i>[PLEASE CLARIFY]</i> organizations	40%	20%	20%	20%	80%
About what percent of your income, beyond the tithe, do you usually give in freewill (<i>other</i>) offerings?	20%	20%	40%	60%	80%

Table of Specifications**

Please mark the box(es) corresponding to any and all variables measured by each question.

Item	Healthy Individual Community Connectedness Variables		Congregational Health Variables		
	Formal Connectedness	Informal Connectedness	Spiritual Experience	Organizational Religiousness*	Commitment*
To what extent do you support the following causes with your above –tithe offerings? <i>What % of other offerings do you give to each?</i>			Do Not Mark in This Row		
Local congregational needs	40%		20%	40%	80%
Local conference projects	40%		20%		80%
Sabbath school offerings	40%		20%	40%	80%
World budget	40%		20%	40%	80%
Christian education (not tuition)	40%		20%	20%	80%
Adventist radio, television and internet ministries	40%		20%	40%	80%
Global Mission projects	40%		20%	20%	80%
ADRA	40%	20%	20%	20%	80%
Adventist World Radio	40%		20%	20%	60%
Independent Adventist ministries (Quiet Hour, Amazing Facts, ICC, 3ABN, etc.)	40%		20%	20%	40%
Non-Adventist ministries (Salvation Army, UNICEF, etc.)		60%	40%		60%

Table of Specifications**

Please mark the box(es) corresponding to any and all variables measured by each question.

Item	Healthy Individual Community Connectedness Variables		Congregational Health Variables		
	Formal Connectedness	Informal Connectedness	Spiritual Experience	Organizational Religiousness*	Commitment*
In the last month, how much did you volunteer through your church or other organization(s) in the following activities?	Do Not Mark in This Row				
Emergency relief or material assistance (food, clothes for the needy)	60%	60%	40%		40%
Counseling or support groups (marriage or bereavement counseling, parenting groups, suicide prevention, women's groups)	80%	60%	20%		20%
Emergency response organizations (Disaster Response, Fire Department, Police, CERT, NERT, Red Cross)	60%	60%	40%		20%
Programs for children and youth (job training, literacy programs, tutoring, scouting, local schools, sports)	80%	60%	40%		20%
Health related programs and activities (blood drives, screenings, health education)	80%	60%	40%		20%
Professional services (medical dental, legal)	80%	40%	20%		20%
Deaf or blind ministry	60%	60%	20%		20%
Senior citizen programs or assistance (Meals on Wheels, transportation, Eldercare ministry, nursing homes, assisted living)	80%	60%	20%		20%
Arts, music, or cultural activities or programs	60%	60%	20%		20%
Day care, preschool, before- or after-school programs	80%	60%	20%		20%
Prison or jail ministry	40%	60%	40%	20%	20%
Hobby or craft groups	60%	60%	20%		
Voter registration or voter education	60%	60%	20%		20%

Table of Specifications**

Please mark the box(es) corresponding to any and all variables measured by each question.

Item	Healthy Individual Community Connectedness Variables		Congregational Health Variables		
	Formal Connectedness	Informal Connectedness	Spiritual Experience	Organizational Religiousness*	Commitment*
In the last month, how much did you volunteer through your church or other organization(s) in the following activities?	Do Not Mark in This Row				
Community organizing or neighborhood action groups (neighborhood associations, library, zoo, environmental cleaning)	80%	60%	20%		20%
Housing for other groups (crisis, youth shelters, homeless, students)	80%	60%	20%		20%
Substance abuse or 12-step recovery programs	80%	60%	20%		20%
Political or social justice activities (civil rights, human rights)	80%	60%	40%		20%
Care for persons with disabilities (skills training, respite care, home care)	60%	60%	40%		20%
Immigrant support activities (English as a second language, refugee support, interpreting service)	80%	60%	40%		20%
Animal welfare or environmental activities	60%	60%	40%		20%
Service clubs (Kiwanis, Rotary, etc.)	80%	60%	20%		20%
Activities for unemployed people (preparation for job seeking, skills training)	80%	60%	20%		20%
Other welfare, community service, or social action activities not mentioned here	60%	60%	20%		20%
How many of your close friends are not members of your church denomination?	20%	100%	40%	20%	20%
How many of your casual friends are not members of your	20%	100%	40%	20%	20%

Table of Specifications**

Please mark the box(es) corresponding to any and all variables measured by each question.

Item	Healthy Individual Community Connectedness Variables		Congregational Health Variables		
	Formal Connectedness	Informal Connectedness	Spiritual Experience	Organizational Religiousness*	Commitment*
church denomination?					
How many of your professional friends are not members of your church denomination?	20%	100%	40%	20%	20%
How many of your immediate family members (spouse, children, parents) are not members of your church denomination?		80%	20%	20%	40%
How often do you do the following activities on your own for others? <i>(Not including your family or congregation.)</i>	Do not Mark in This Row				
Donate or prepare food for someone.		100%	20%		20%
Help someone find a job.		100%	20%		20%
Care for someone who needs help.		100%	20%		20%
Contact people who need encouragement.		100%	20%		20%
Loan/give money to someone.		100%	20%		20%
Do something loving/caring for someone.		100%	20%		20%
Pray for someone. <i>(Is a more directly evangelistic activity, or, at least, a spiritual activity)</i>		80%	20%		20%
Say, "I love you," or hug someone.		80%	40%		20%
Throw a party for someone.		100%	40%		

Table of Specifications**

Please mark the box(es) corresponding to any and all variables measured by each question.

Item	Healthy Individual Community Connectedness Variables		Congregational Health Variables		
	Formal Connectedness	Informal Connectedness	Spiritual Experience	Organizational Religiousness*	Commitment*
How often do you do the following activities on your own for others? <i>(Not including your family or congregation.)</i>	Do not Mark in This Row				
Volunteer when you are with a group of people and someone asks for help.		100%	20%	20%	40%
Do a loving/caring act anonymously.		80%	40%		20%
Invite someone to your home for a meal.		100%	40%	20%	20%
Give away a “cherished” item to someone in need.		100%	40%		20%
Buy or share your food with someone.		100%	40%	20%	20%
Give someone a ride (went out of your way).		100%	40%		
Smile and speak kindly to the poor or needy.		100%	40%		
Made an active sacrifice for someone in need.		80%	40%		
Accept a favor or unpaid help from someone.		80%	40%		
Please finish on next page					
Are the questions you have marked in each column sufficient to measure that variable? Please answer with a percentage, for example: “95%” (sufficient).	92%	95%	91%	86%	92%

Table of Specifications**

Please mark the box(es) corresponding to any and all variables measured by each question.

Item	Healthy Individual Community Connectedness Variables		Congregational Health Variables		
	Formal Connectedness	Informal Connectedness	Spiritual Experience	Organizational Religiousness*	Commitment*
Is there something else we should add? Please explain by typing in the appropriate box.				Does your church have or cosponsor a faith-based agency for community service? Y/N How have you volunteered in this organization in the last year? (open-ended; do cluster analysis of the data)	Could combine some of the Adventist media (e.g. Adventist radio... & Adventist World Radio) This could be expanded I think.
Is there something we could delete? Please explain by typing in the appropriate box.		You do not need all of these; keep the ones where you have comparative norms from other studies, such as FACT.	You do not need all of these; keep the ones where you have comparative norms from other studies, such as FACT.		You do not need all of these; keep the ones where you have comparative norms from other studies, such as FACT.

*These variables will also be measured by examining in-house Conference records related to receipted tithes and offerings, membership trends and attendance records.

**Demographic questions have not been included in this table.

THANK YOU



THANK YOU



THANK YOU



Definitions for Variables Measuring Members' Community Connections*

Community Connections — interactions between members and others who are not church members. Community Connections is divided into two subscales: formal and informal.

I. Formal Connections: Activities and interactions done through an organized endeavor, i.e. service clubs, church programs, community organizations, neighborhood association meetings, city council, etc.

II. Informal Connections: Activities and interactions resulting from spontaneous, often self-initiated endeavors, i.e. giving money, making food, mowing a lawn, giving a hug, throwing a birthday party, accepting a favor, offering a ride, etc.

*Definition of *Connected*: “having a social, professional or commercial relationship”—Webster

Definitions for Variables Measuring Congregational Health

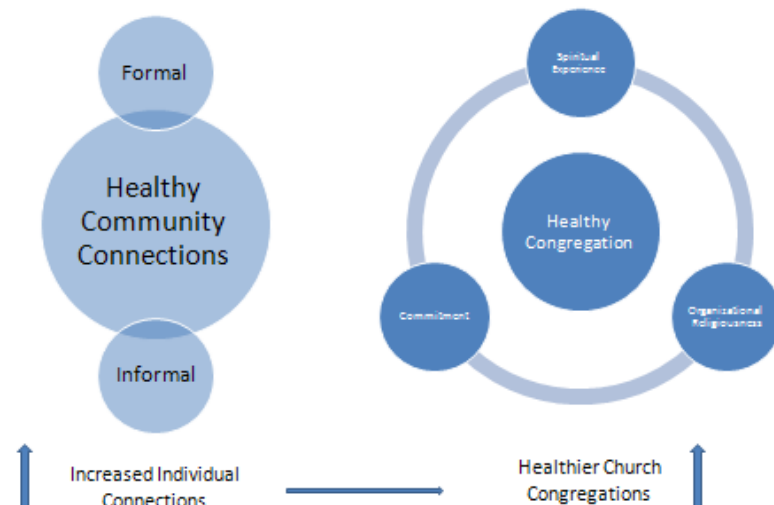
Healthy Congregations— Local church congregations comprised of members who report a vibrant spiritual experience and demonstrate organizational religiousness and commitment.

I. Spiritual Experience: Individual members' daily spiritual experiences, spiritual meaning in life and private religious practices.

II. Organizational Religiousness: Individual members' public religious practices, church attendance, participation in church activities.

III. Commitment: Individual members' giving of time and money, congregational membership growth and retention.

Is there a relationship between individual member's community connectedness and the health of the local congregation?



APPENDIX B

PILOT STUDY

Community Connectedness Survey

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. Most people take about 15 minutes to answer all the questions. Your answers will help your church better understand how church growth relates to the variety of ways that church members interact with their neighbors.

By completing this survey you agree to the following statement: "I have received the cover letter and recognize that by completing and returning this survey, that I am giving my informed consent to participate."

Please return this survey to the person who gave it to you.

Please mark only one answer for each question

1. What is your current position in this church?

- ☐ Pastor
- ☐ Member holding a church office or other position of service
- ☐ Member not holding a church office or other position of service

2. In what type of community is your home church located?

- ☐ City of more than 50,000 population
- ☐ Suburb of a city
- ☐ Small town of less than 50,000 population
- ☐ Rural area

3. About how long does it take you to get to church?

- ☐ 10 minutes or less
- ☐ 11 – 20 minutes
- ☐ 21 – 30 minutes
- ☐ More than 30 minutes

4. What is your gender

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female

5. What category best fits your age?

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Less than 18 | <input type="checkbox"/> 55 – 59 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 18 – 24 | <input type="checkbox"/> 60 – 64 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 25 – 34 | <input type="checkbox"/> 65 – 74 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 35 – 44 | <input type="checkbox"/> 75 – 84 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 45 – 54 | <input type="checkbox"/> 85 and over |

6. What level of formal education have you completed?

- ☐ Did not finish high school
- ☐ High school or GED
- ☐ Some college
- ☐ College degree
- ☐ Post-college degree

7. If you compare the style of worship in your church to the other Adventist churches across North America, would you say that the worship style in your church is?

- ☐ More traditional?
- ☐ More contemporary?
- ☐ About the same as most churches?

8. Are you comfortable bringing your community friends and work associates to your church?

- ☐ Agree Strongly
- ☐ Agree Moderately
- ☐ Agree Slightly
- ☐ Disagree Slightly
- ☐ Disagree Moderately
- ☐ Disagree Strongly

9. How long have you have been a member of this local church?

- ☐ One year or less
- ☐ 11- 20 years
- ☐ 1-5 years
- ☐ More than 20 years
- ☐ 6-10 years
- ☐ Not a member

10. If you are a member, how many years have you been a baptized Seventh-day Adventist?

- ☐ Less than 1 year
- ☐ 1 year
- ☐ 2 years
- ☐ 3 years
- ☐ 4 years
- ☐ 5 years
- ☐ 6 – 10 years
- ☐ More than 10 years
- ☐ Not a member

11. Please indicate the category of your family income:

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Under \$10,000 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$30,000 to \$49,999 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$10,000 to \$19,999 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$50,000 to \$74,999 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$20,000 to \$29,999 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$75,000 or over |

12. Please indicate your race or ethnicity:

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> American Indian or Alaska Native | <input type="checkbox"/> Hispanic or Latino/a |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Asian or Pacific Islander | <input type="checkbox"/> Native Hawaiian |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Black (Not African American) | <input type="checkbox"/> White (Not Hispanic or Latino/a) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> African-American | <input type="checkbox"/> Other |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Black (Caribbean) | |

Please mark the answer that best fits you.

	Many times a day	Every day	Most days	Some days	Once in awhile	Almost never or Never
I feel God's presence.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I feel deep inner peace or harmony.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I feel God's love for me, directly or through others.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am spiritually touched by the beauty of creation.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I desire to be closer or in union with God.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

In general, how close to God do you feel?

☐ Not at all close ☐ Somewhat close ☐ Very close ☐ As close as possible

Over the last year, how have you grown in your faith?

☐ A Great Deal ☐ Much ☐ Somewhat ☐ Little ☐ None

Please mark the answer that best fits you.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
As I grow older my understanding of God changes.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The events in my life unfold according to a divine or greater plan.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I have a sense of mission or calling in my own life.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I consider myself a religious person.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I consider myself a spiritual person.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

<i>Please mark the answer that best fits you.</i>	More than once a day	Once a day	A few times a week	Once a week	A few times a month	Once a month or less	Never
How often do you pray privately in places other than at church?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
How often do you watch or listen to religious programs on TV, radio or Internet?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
How often do you read the Bible or other religious literature?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

I spend time in small group fellowship

☐ Always ☐ Almost always ☐ Often ☐ Sometimes ☐ Once in awhile ☐ Rarely ☐ Never

I attend weekly worship services

☐ Always ☐ Almost always ☐ Often ☐ Sometimes ☐ Once in awhile ☐ Rarely ☐ Never

How often do you serve your church in teaching, church project leadership or other responsibilities?

- ☐ More than once a week
☐ Weekly or almost weekly
☐ Once or twice a month
☐ A few times a year
☐ Never

I give large amounts of time and money to help others.

☐ Always ☐ Almost always ☐ Often ☐ Sometimes ☐ Once in awhile ☐ Rarely ☐ Never

Out of the last four Sabbaths, how many times did you attend church?

☐ 4 ☐ 3 ☐ 2 ☐ 1 ☐ 0

Please mark as the answer best fits you.

In an average week, how many unpaid hours do you spend in activities on behalf of your church?

20 hours or more	10 – 19 hours	5-9 hours	3-5 hours	1-2 hours	No time at all
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

In an average week, how many hours do you spend helping people not in your church, outside of any volunteer or paid professional role or structured program?

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------

How much of your annual income do you give to your local church?

☐ More than 15% ☐ 11%-14% ☐ 5%-10% ☐ Less than 5% ☐ None

During the last year what percent of your annual income did you give as tithe?

☐ At least 10% ☐ Between 5% and 10% ☐ Less than 5% ☐ None

Do you ever give tithe to organizations other than your own local church?

	Never	Occasionally	Often a portion of it	Regularly a portion of it	Regularly all of it
Another local church	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My local conference, bypassing the church	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Another local conference	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My union of the General Conference	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Overseas denominational organizations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
SDA denominational radio, TV and Internet ministries	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other organizations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

About what percent of your income, beyond the tithe, do you usually give in freewill offerings?

☐ More than 15% ☐ 11% to 14% ☐ 5% to 10% ☐ Less than 5% ☐ None

To what extent do you support the following causes with your above-tithe offerings?

	Regularly	Occasionally	Never
Local congregational needs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Local conference projects	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sabbath school offerings	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
World budget	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Christian education (not tuition)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Adventist radio, TV and Internet ministries	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Global Mission projects	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
ADRA	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Independent Adventist ministries (Quiet Hour, Amazing Facts, ICC, 3ABN, Maranatha, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Non-Adventist ministries (Salvation Army, UNICEF, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

How many of the following are not members of your church denomination?

	10 or more	5-9	1-4	None
Your close friends	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Your casual friends	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Your professional friends	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Your immediate family members (spouse, children, parents)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

In the last month, how much did you volunteer through your church or other organizations in the following activities?

	More than 20	10 – 19 hours	4-9 hours	1-3 hours	None
Emergency relief or material assistance (food, clothes for the needy)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Counseling or support groups (marriage or bereavement counseling, parenting groups, suicide prevention, women's groups)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Emergency response organizations (Disaster Response, Fire Department, Police, CERT, NERT, Red Cross)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Programs for children and youth (job training, literacy programs, tutoring, scouting, local schools, sports)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Health related programs and activities (blood drives, screenings, health education)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Professional services (medical dental, legal)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Deaf or blind ministry	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Senior citizen programs or assistance (Meals on Wheels, transportation, Eldercare Ministry, nursing homes, assisted living)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Arts, music, or cultural activities or programs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Day care, preschool, before- or after-school programs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Prison or jail ministry	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Hobby or craft groups	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Voter registration or voter education	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Community organizing or neighborhood action groups (neighborhood associations, library, zoo, environmental cleaning)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Housing for other groups (crisis, youth shelters, homeless, students)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Substance abuse or 12-step recovery programs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Political or social justice activities (civil rights, human rights)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Care for persons with disabilities (skills training, respite care, home care)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Immigrant support activities (English as a second language, refugee support, interpreting service)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Animal welfare or environmental activities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Service clubs (Kiwanis, Rotary, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Activities for unemployed people (preparation for job seeking, skills training)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other welfare, community service, or social action activities not mentioned here	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

How often do you do the following activities on your own for others? (<i>Not including your family or congregation.</i>)	More than once a day	Once a day	A few times a week	Once a week	A few times a month	Once a month or less	Never
Donate or prepare food for someone.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Help someone find a job.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Care for someone who needs help.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Contact people who need encouragement.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Loan/give money to someone.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do something loving/caring for someone.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pray for someone.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Say, "I love you," or hug someone.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Throw a party for someone.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Volunteer when you are with a group of people and someone asks for help.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do a loving/caring act anonymously.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Invite someone to your home for a meal.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Give away a "cherished" item to someone in need.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Buy or share your food with someone.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Give someone a ride(went out of your way).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Smile and speak kindly to the poor or needy.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Made an active sacrifice for someone in need.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Accept a favor or unpaid help from someone.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please put your completed survey in the envelope provided and return it to the person who gave it to you.

Thank you very much.

APPENDIX C

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL

Andrews University

September 21, 2009

9170 SE Northpoint Ct.
Happy Valley OR 97086

RE: APPLICATION FOR APPROVAL OF RESEARCH INVOLVING HUMAN SUBJECTS

IRB Protocol #: 09-096 **Application Type:** Original **Dept:** Leadership

Review Category: Exempt **Action Taken:** Approved **Advisor:** Erich

Baumgartner

Title: The development and validation of a scale to measure Seventh-day Adventist church
connectedness to community: A community connectedness scale

This letter is to advise you that the Institutional Review Board (IRB) has reviewed and approved your proposal for research. You have been given clearance to proceed with your research plans.

All changes made to the study design and/or consent form, after initiation of the project, require prior approval from the IRB before such changes can be implemented. Feel free to contact our office if you have any questions. In all communications with our office, please be sure to identify your research by its IRB Protocol number.

The duration of the present approval is for one year. If your research is going to take more than one year, you must apply for an extension of your approval in order to be authorized to continue with this project.

Some proposal and research design designs may be of such a nature that participation in the project may involve certain risks to human subjects. If your project is one of this nature and in the implementation of your project an incidence occurs which results in a research-related adverse reaction and/or physical injury, such an occurrence must be reported immediately in writing to the Institutional Review Board. Any project-related physical injury must also be reported immediately to University Medical Specialties, by calling (269) 473-2222.

We wish you success as you implement the research project as outlined in the approved protocol.

Sincerely,

Joeth Abara

Administrative Coordinator
Institutional Review Board

Institutional Review Board
(269) 471-6360 Fax: (269) 471-6246 E-mail: irb@andrews.edu
Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI 49104-0355

APPENDIX D

COMMUNITY CONNECTEDNESS SURVEY



SEVENTH-DAY
ADVENTIST®
CHURCH

October 2009

Dear Church Member,

The Bible says we are made to do good (Ephesians 2:10). Stephen Post, Director of the Center for Medical Humanities, Compassionate Care, and Bioethics in the School of Medicine, Stony Brook University, confirms this in his recent citing of evidence that doing good improves health and prolongs life. Seventh-day Adventists have always been about loving our neighbors. The question is, "If doing good makes us healthy, does it also make our churches healthy?"

The Oregon Conference Administration, Ministerial and Community Outreach departments, working in collaboration with Andrews University would like to know if there is a relationship between the compassionate community connections of our members and the growth and vitality of our churches. So, we are asking every English-speaking church in the Oregon Conference to help us find the answer.

You have been chosen to help in this project through a random sampling of church members. Participation is purely voluntary and results will be reported as composite church scores. Churches will be able to view their own results. The number on your survey will be used to ensure that we remove you from our follow-up reminder list. No individual scores will be made accessible to anyone except the researcher analyzing the data.

It is estimated the survey will take about 20 minutes to complete. Please answer every question. Your participation will help your pastors and church leaders in their quest to build healthier churches, more loving congregations and win souls for Christ. You may direct any questions to Rhonda Whitney, rhonda.whitney@oc.npuc.org, (503) 850-3556, Community Outreach Department, Oregon Conference, 19800 Oatfield Road, Gladstone, OR 97027.

Please complete this survey promptly and return it in the enclosed envelope to your pastor or the person who gave it to you. Thank you very much for your help in this research.

Blessings to you as we work together for Jesus,

Al Reimche
President
Outreach

Stan Beerman
Director, Ministerial





Rhonda Whitney
Director, Community

PS: Thank you for your gift of time to this important research. Your response today will help shape the church of tomorrow. Only you have the answers.

Community Connectedness Survey

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. It should take about 15 minutes to answer all the questions. Your answers will help your church better understand how church growth relates to the variety of ways that church members interact with their neighbors.

By completing this survey you agree to the following statement: "I have received the cover letter and recognize that by completing and returning this survey, that I am giving my informed consent to participate."

Please return this survey to the person who gave it to you. Like this:  Not like this:   

Please fill in only one circle per question.

1. What is your current position in this church?

- ☐ Pastor
- ☐ Member holding a church office or other position of service
- ☐ Member not holding a church office or other position of service

2. In what type of community is your home church located?

- ☐ City of more than 50,000 population
- ☐ Suburb of a city
- ☐ Small town of less than 50,000 people
- ☐ Rural area

3. About how long does it take you to get to church?

- ☐ 10 minutes or less
- ☐ 11 – 20 minutes
- ☐ 21 – 30 minutes
- ☐ More than 30 minutes

4. What is your gender?

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female

5. What category best fits your age?

- | | |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> Less than 18 | <input type="radio"/> 55 – 59 |
| <input type="radio"/> 18 – 24 | <input type="radio"/> 60 – 64 |
| <input type="radio"/> 25 – 34 | <input type="radio"/> 65 – 74 |
| <input type="radio"/> 35 – 44 | <input type="radio"/> 75 – 84 |
| <input type="radio"/> 45 – 54 | <input type="radio"/> 85 and over |

6. What is the highest level of formal education you have completed?

- ☐ Did not finish high school
- ☐ High school or GED
- ☐ Some college
- ☐ College degree
- ☐ Post-college degree

7. If you compare the style of worship in your church to the other Adventist churches across North America, would you say that the worship style in your church is

- ☐ More traditional?
- ☐ More contemporary?
- ☐ About the same as most churches?

8. Are you comfortable bringing your community friends and work associates to your church?

- ☐ Very comfortable
- ☐ Moderately comfortable
- ☐ Slightly comfortable
- ☐ Slightly uncomfortable
- ☐ Moderately uncomfortable
- ☐ Very uncomfortable

9. How long have you have been a member of this local church?

- ☐ One year or less
- ☐ 1-5 years
- ☐ 6-10 years
- ☐ 11- 20 years
- ☐ More than 20 years
- ☐ Not a member

10. If you are a member, how many years have you been a baptized Seventh-day Adventist?

- ☐ Not a member
- ☐ Less than 1 year
- ☐ 1 year
- ☐ 2 years ☐ 5 years
- ☐ 3 years ☐ 6 – 10 years
- ☐ 4 years ☐ More than 10 years

11. Please indicate the category of your family income:

- ☐ Under \$10,000
- ☐ \$10,000 - \$19,999
- ☐ \$20,000 - \$29,999
- ☐ \$30,000 - \$49,999
- ☐ \$50,000 - \$74,999
- ☐ \$75,000 or over

12. Please indicate your race or ethnicity:

- ☐ American Indian or Alaska Native
- ☐ Asian or Pacific Islander
- ☐ African-American
- ☐ Black (Not African American)
- ☐ Black (Caribbean)
- ☐ Hispanic or Latino/a
- ☐ Native Hawaiian
- ☐ White (Not Hispanic or Latino/a)
- ☐ Other

13. In general, how close to God do you feel?

- ☐ Not at all close
- ☐ Somewhat close
- ☐ Very close
- ☐ As close as possible

14. Over the last year, how have you grown in your faith?

- ☐ A Great Deal
- ☐ Much
- ☐ Somewhat
- ☐ Little
- ☐ None

15. How often do you spend time in small group fellowship?

- ☐ Always
- ☐ Almost always
- ☐ Often
- ☐ Sometimes
- ☐ Once in awhile
- ☐ Rarely
- ☐ Never

16. How often do you serve your church in teaching, church project leadership or other responsibilities?

- ☐ More than once a week
- ☐ Weekly or almost weekly
- ☐ Once or twice a month
- ☐ A few times a year
- ☐ Never

17. How often do you give money to help others?

- ☐ Always
- ☐ Almost always
- ☐ Often
- ☐ Sometimes
- ☐ Once in awhile
- ☐ Rarely
- ☐ Never

28. Out of the last four Sabbaths, how many times did you attend church?

- ☐ 4
- ☐ 3
- ☐ 2
- ☐ 1
- ☐ None

29. Out of the last four Sabbaths, how many times did you attend Sabbath School?

- ☐ 4
- ☐ 3
- ☐ 2
- ☐ 1
- ☐ None

Please mark the answer that best fits you.

	Many times a day	Every day	Most days	Some days	Once in awhile	Almost never or Never
18. I feel God's presence.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
19. I feel deep inner peace or harmony.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
20. I feel God's love for me, directly or through others.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
21. I am spiritually touched by the beauty of creation.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
22. I desire to be closer to, or in union with God.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please mark the answer that best fits you.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
23. As I grow older my understanding of God changes.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
24. The events in my life unfold according to a divine or greater plan.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
25. I have a sense of mission or calling in my own life.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
26. I consider myself a religious person.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
27. I consider myself a spiritual person.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

<i>Please mark the answer that best fits you.</i>		More than once a day	Once a day	A few times a week	Once a week	A few times a month	Once a month or less	Never
30.	How often do you pray privately in places other than at church?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
31.	How often do you watch or listen to religious programs on TV, radio or Internet?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
32.	How often do you read the Bible or other religious literature?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

<i>Please mark as the answer best fits you.</i>		20 hours or more	10 – 19 hours	5-9 hours	3-5 hours	1-2 hours	Less than 1 hour	No time at all
33.	In an average week, how many unpaid hours do you spend in activities on behalf of your church?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
34.	In an average week, how many hours do you spend helping people not in your church, outside of any volunteer or paid professional role or structured program?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
35.	How much of your annual income do you give to your local church, including all tithes and offerings?							
	<input type="radio"/> More than 15%							
	<input type="radio"/> 11%-14%							
	<input type="radio"/> 5%-10%							
	<input type="radio"/> Less than 5%							
	<input type="radio"/> None							
36.	During the last year what percent of your annual income did you give as tithe?							
	<input type="radio"/> At least 10%							
	<input type="radio"/> Between 5% and 10%							
	<input type="radio"/> Less than 5%							
	<input type="radio"/> None							

37. Do you ever give tithe to organizations other than your own local church?	Never	Occasionally	Often a portion of it	Regularly a portion of it	Regularly all of it
a. Another local church	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b. My local conference, bypassing the church	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c. Another local conference	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d. My union of the General Conference	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
e. Overseas denominational organizations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
f. SDA denominational radio, TV and Internet ministries	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
g. Other organizations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

38. About what percent of your income, beyond the tithe, do you usually give in other offerings?

- ☐ More than 15%
☐ 11% to 14%
☐ 5% to 10%
☐ Less than 5%

39. To what extent do you support the following causes with your other offerings?

	Regularly	Occasionally	Never
a. Local congregational needs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b. Local conference projects	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c. Sabbath school offerings	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d. World budget	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
e. Christian education (not tuition)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
f. Adventist radio, TV and Internet ministries	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
g. Global Mission projects	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
h. ADRA	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
i. Independent Adventist ministries (Quiet Hour, Amazing Facts, ICC, 3ABN, Maranatha, etc.)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
j. Non-Adventist ministries (Salvation Army, UNICEF, etc.)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

40. How many of the following are not members of your church denomination?	10 or more	5-9	1-4	None
a. Your close friends	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b. Your casual friends	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c. Your professional friends	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d. Your immediate family members (spouse, children, parents)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

41. How often do you do the following activities on your own for others? (Not including for your family or congregation.)	More than once a day	Once a day	A few times a week	Once a week	A few times a month	Once a month or less	Never
a. Donate or prepare food for someone.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b. Help someone find a job.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c. Care for someone who needs help.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d. Contact people who need encouragement.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
e. Loan/give money to someone.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
f. Do something loving/caring for someone.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
g. Pray for someone.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
h. Say, "I love you," or hug someone.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
i. Throw a party for someone.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
j. Volunteer when you are with a group of people and someone asks for help.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
k. Do a loving/caring act anonymously.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
l. Invite someone to your home for a meal.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
m. Give away a "cherished" item to someone in need.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
n. Buy or share your food with someone.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
o. Give someone a ride (went out of your way).	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
p. Smile and speak kindly to the poor or needy.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
q. Made an active sacrifice for someone in need.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
r. Accept a favor or unpaid help from someone.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

APPENDIX E

CORRELATION MATRIX

Table 26

Correlation Matrix

Correlation Matrix												
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1. Spiritual Vitality	1											
2. Informal Connectedness	0.271**	1										
3. Formal Connectedness	0.313**	0.605**	1									
4. Of Non-SDA	-0.194*	0.163	0.178	1								
5. Levels of Monetary Giving	0.485**	0.009	-0.077	-0.240**	1							
6. Levels of Volunteerism	0.588**	0.106	0.151	-0.127	0.475**	1						
7. Membership Growth	-0.203*	0.175	0.212*	0.165	-0.332**	-0.206*	1					
8. Age	0.331**	-0.126	-0.029	-0.302**	0.413**	0.168	-0.312**	1				
9. Length of Membership	0.005	-0.076	-0.042	0.119	0.320**	0.027	-0.065	0.257**	1			
10. Commute Time	-0.230*	0.194*	-0.043	0.040	-0.168	-0.181	0.221*	-0.218*	-0.206	1		
11. Pastor	0.101	-0.180	-0.127	0.233*	0.234*	0.421**	-0.115	-0.097	0.096	-0.182	1	
12. Officer	0.204*	0.343**	0.084	-0.327**	0.232*	0.286**	-0.104	0.038	0.002	0.202*	-0.461**	1

REFERENCE LIST

REFERENCE LIST

- Adams, D., & Hess, M. (2005). *Measuring community engagement*. Retrieved from www.engagingcommunities2005.org/abstracts/Hess-Michael-final.pdf
- Adams, M. (2005). *American backlash: The untold story of social change in the United States*. Toronto, Canada: Penguin Group.
- Adventist Church Connect. (2009). *Church history*. Retrieved January 29, 2009, from <http://www.aldergrovesda.org/article.php?id=60>
- Adventist News Network. (2010a). *Five years of outreach, growth mark Adventist Church's half decade*. Retrieved June 23, 2010, from <http://news.adventist.org/2010/06/the-seventh-day-adve.html>
- Adventist News Network. (2010b). *Welcome to Atlanta, home of the fastest growing Adventist church in the U.S.* Retrieved June 22, 2010, from <http://news.adventist.org/2010/06/welcome-to-atlanta-h.html>
- Ammerman, N. T. (2001). Doing good in American communities: Congregation and service organizations working together. *Hartford Institute for Religious Research*. Retrieved from [http://dcommon.bu.edu/xmlui/bitstream/handle/2144/19/Doing %20Good%20in%20American%20Communities_%20Congregations%20and%20Service%20Organizations%20Working%20Together.pdf?sequence=4](http://dcommon.bu.edu/xmlui/bitstream/handle/2144/19/Doing%20Good%20in%20American%20Communities_%20Congregations%20and%20Service%20Organizations%20Working%20Together.pdf?sequence=4)
- Anderson University. (2010). The Warner Sallman collection. Retrieved June 24, 2010, from <http://www.warnersallman.com/collection/images/christ-at-hearts-door/>
- Arn, C. (2003). *White unto harvest: Evangelizing today's senior adults*. Monrovia, CA: Institute for Church Growth.
- Arn, C., & Arn, W. (1999). *Catch the age wave: A handbook for effective ministry with senior adults*. Kansas City, MO: Beacon Hill Press.
- Arn, C., & Arn, W. (2004). *The new senior: Preparing your church for the age wave*. Monrovia, CA: Institute for American Church Growth.
- Arn, W. (1987). *The church growth ratio book: How to have a revitalized . . . healthy . . . growing . . . loving . . . church*. Pasadena, CA: Church Growth Press.
- Arn, W., Nyquist, C., & Arn, C. (1988). *Who cares about love? How to bring together the great commission and the great commandment*. Monrovia, CA: Church Growth Press.

- Baggett, J. P. (2002). Congregations and civil society: A double-edge connection. *Journal of Church and State*, 44(3), 425-454.
- Barna, G. (2008). *New study shows trends in tithing and donating*. Retrieved August 2009 from <http://barna.org/barna-update/article/18-congregations/41-new-study-shows-trends-in-tithing-and-donating>
- Barna, G. (2009). Church attendance. *The Barna Group*. Retrieved January 28, 2009, from <http://www.barna.org/barna-update/article/5-barna-update/37-annual-study-reveals-america-is-spiritually-stagnant?q=church+attendance>.
- Barrett, D. (2010). Status of Global Mission, 2010. *International Bulletin of Missionary Research*, 34(1), 36-37.
- Bass, D. B. (2007). *Christianity for the rest of us: How the neighborhood church is transforming the faith*. New York: HarperCollins.
- Bellah, R., Maden, R., Sullivan, W. M., Swidler, A., & Tipton, S. (1996). *Habits of the heart: Individualism and commitment in American life*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Bielby, D. D. (1992). Commitment to work and family. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 18, 281-302.
- Brady, J. A. (2006). Justice for the poor in a land of plenty: A place at the table. *Religious Education*, 101(3), 347-367.
- Brafman, O., & Brafman, R. (2008). *Sway: The irresistible pull of irrational behavior*. New York: Doubleday.
- Bronfenbrenner, U. (1973, April). *An emerging theoretical perspective for research in human development*. Paper presented at the Biennial Meeting of Society for Research in Child Development, Philadelphia.
- Bronfenbrenner, U. (1977). Toward an experimental ecology of human development. *American Psychologist*, 32(7), 513-531.
- Bronfenbrenner, U. (1979a). Contexts of child rearing: Problems and prospects. *American Psychologist*, 34(10), 844-850.
- Bronfenbrenner, U. (1979b). *The ecology of human development*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Bronfenbrenner, U. (1986). Ecology of the family as a context for human development research perspectives. *Developmental Psychology*, 22(6), 723-742.
- Brownson, J., Dietterich, I. T., Harvey, B. A., & West, C. C. (2003). *StormFront: The good news of God*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans.

- Bruce, D. (2004). *How are worshipers involved in the community? Findings from the U.S. Congregational Life Survey*. Louisville, KY: U.S. Congregations and Research Services, Presbyterian Church (USA).
- Bruce, D., Woolever, C., Wulff, K., & Smith-Williams, I. (2006). Fast-growing churches: What distinguishes them from others? *Journal of Beliefs and Values*, 27(1), 111-126.
- Byrd, C. P. (2009). *Contemporary evangelism for the 21st century*. Chicago, IL: Hardnett Publishing.
- Cameron, H., Richter, P., Davis, D., & Ward, F. (Eds.). (2005). *Studying local churches: A handbook*. St. Albans Place, London: SCM Press.
- Carlton-LaNey, I. (2007, Winter). 'Doing the Lord's Work': African American elders' civic engagement. *Civic Engagement in Later Life*, 47-50.
- Chavez, M., & Higgins, L. M. (1992). Comparing the community involvement of Black and White congregations. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 31(4), 425-440.
- Clouzet, R. E. (2009, August). Doing evangelism when no one seems to care. *Ministry*, 10-12.
- Cnaan, R. A., & Boddie, S. C. (2002). Charitable choice and faith-based welfare: A call for social work. *Social Work*, 47(3), 224-235.
- Coleman, R. E. (2005). The Jesus way to win the church. *Evangelical Review of Theology*, 29(1), 77-81.
- Commission on Children at Risk. (2003). *Hardwired to connect: The new scientific case for authoritative communities executive summary*: Dartmouth Medical School, Institute for American Values, YMCA of the USA, New York.
- Conn, H. M. (Ed.). (1997). *Planting and growing urban churches: From dream to reality*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books.
- Connections. (2009). In *Merriam-Webster's online dictionary*. Retrieved from <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/connections>
- Creswell, J. W. (2008). *Educational research: Planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research* (3rd ed.). Columbus, OH: Pearson Merrill Prentice Hall.
- Day, W. (2002). *The development of a comprehensive definition of church health*. Paper presented at the Ola Farmer Lenaz Lecture. Retrieved from <http://www.baptistcenter.com/Papers,%20etc/Lenaz/Day%20-%20Church%20Health.pdf>

- de Groot, K. (2006). The church in liquid modernity: A sociological and theological exploration. *International Journal for the Study of the Christian Church*, 6(1), 91-103.
- Dixon, R. C., & Hogue, D. R. (1979). Models and priorities of the Catholic church as held by suburban laity. *Review of Religious Research*, 20(2), 150-167.
- Dudley, C. S. (1991). From typical church to social ministry: A study of the elements which mobilize congregations. *Review of Religious Research*, 32(3), 195-212.
- Dudley, C. S., & Roozen, D. A. (2001). *Faith communities today: A report on religion in the United States today*. Hartford, CT: Hartford Seminary.
- Dudley, R. L. (2006a). Beyond the ordinary and Adventist congregations. *Review of Religious Research*, 48(1), 50-55.
- Dudley, R. L. (2006b). *Community service and church growth: A first look at 2005 FACT data in Seventh-day Adventist congregations*. Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University.
- Dudley, R. L., & Muthersbaugh, H. P. (1996). Social attachment to the Seventh-day Adventist church among young adults. *Review of Religious Research*, 38(1), 38-50.
- Duke University. (2008). *About the National Congregations Study*. Retrieved August 14, 2009, from <http://www.soc.duke.edu/natcong/about.html>
- Ellison, C. G. (1991). Religious involvement and subjective well-being. *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*, 32(1), 80-99.
- Fetzer Institute. (2003). *Multidimensional measurement of religiousness/spirituality for use in health research: A report of the Fetzer Institute/National Institute on Aging working group*. Kalamazoo, MI: Author.
- Fetzer Institute. (2009). *Funding support for compassionate love in a relational context*. Retrieved August 16, 2009, from http://www.fetzer.org/resources/resource-detail/?resource_id=2347
- Fey, S., Bregendahl, C., & Flora, C. (2006). The measurement of community capitals through research: A study conducted for the Claude Worthington Benedum Foundation by the North Central Regional Center for Rural Development. *Online Journal of Rural Research & Policy*, 1(1). Retrieved from <http://ojrrp.org/journals/ojrrp/issue/archive>
- Garland, D., Myers, D., & Wolfer, T. (2006). The impact of volunteering on Christian faith and congregational life: The Service and Faith project. Baylor University, Waco, TX.

- General Conference Office of Archives and Statistics. (2009). *Adventist organizational directory*. Retrieved January 29, 2010, from <http://www.adventistdirectory.org/ViewEntity.aspx?EntityID=14956>
- Gladwell, M. (2002). *The tipping point: How little things can make a big difference*. New York: Little, Brown and Company.
- Green, S. B., & Salkind, N. J. (2005). *Using SPSS for Windows and Macintosh: Analyzing and understanding data* (4th ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Prentice Hall.
- Guder, D. L. (Ed.). (1998). *Missional church: A vision for sending of the church in North America*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans.
- Gunderson, G. (1997). *Deeply woven roots: Improving the quality of life in your community*. Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress.
- Gunderson, G. (2000a, March-June). Backing onto sacred ground. *Public Health Reports: Focus on healthy communities*, 115, 257-261.
- Gunderson, G. (2000b). Emergent wholeness: Congregations in community. *Word & World*, 20(4), 360-367.
- Hadaway, C. K. (2006). *FACTs on growth: A new look at the dynamics of growth and decline in American congregations based on the Faith Communities Today 2005 national survey of congregations*. Hartford, CT: Hartford Institute for Religion Research, Hartford Seminary.
- Hadaway, C. K., & Marler, P. L. (2005). How many Americans attend worship each week? An alternative approach to measurement. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 44(3), 307-322.
- Hahn, C. A. (2007). Uncovering your church's hidden spirit. *Clergy Journal*, 83(8), 14-15.
- Hinkle, D., Wiersma, W., & Jurs, S., G. (2003). *Applied statistics for the behavioral sciences* (5th ed.). Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin.
- Hugen, B., Wolfer, T., & Renkema, J. (2006). Service and faith: The impact on Christian faith of community ministry participation. *Review of Religious Research*, 47(4), 409-426.
- Hunter, G. C., III. (1986). The bridges of contagious evangelism: Social networks. In C. P. Wagner, W. Arn, & E. L. Towns (Eds.), *Church growth state of the art*. Liberty University, Lynchburg, VA.
- Institute of Research on Unlimited Love. (2009). *Mission*. Retrieved April 2009 from <http://unlimitedloveinstitute.org/mission/index.html>

- Johnson, J. P. (2002). *A strategy for using spiritual formation to promote community renewal* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). George Fox Evangelical Seminary, Portland, OR.
- Kanagy, C. L. (1992). Social action, evangelism and ecumenism: The impact of community, theological and church structured variables. *Review of Religious Research*, 34(1), 34-50.
- Keltner, D. (2004, Spring). The compassionate instinct: Think humans are born selfish? Think again. *The Greater Good*, 1, 6-9.
- Kemmelmeier, M., Jamber, E. E., & Letner, J. (2006). Individualism and good works: Cultural variation in giving and volunteering across the United States. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 37, 327-344.
- Killen, P. O., & Silk, M. (Eds.). (2004). *Religion & public life in the Pacific northwest: The none zone*. Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press.
- Knight, G. (2008). *The apocalyptic vision and the neutering of Adventism: Are we erasing our vision?* Hagerstown, MD: Review & Herald.
- Knowles, G. E. (1997). *How to help your church grow: Ministry releases* (Vol. 12). Hagerstown, MD: The Ministerial Association of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.
- Lovenheim, P. (2010). *In the neighborhood: The search for community on an American street, one sleepover at a time*. New York: Penguin Group.
- MacGavran, D. A. (1957). *The bridges of God: A study in the strategy of missions*. London: World Dominion Press.
- McCollum, M. (2005, Winter). Congregation size: What the research tells us. *Congregations*, 1. Retrieved from <http://www.alban.org/conversation.aspx?id=3190>
- McIntosh, G. L. (2009a, Winter). *The impact of size on the growth and development of a church*. *Journal of the American Society of Church Growth*, 20, 85-105.
- McIntosh, G. L. (2009b). *Taking your church to a new level: What got you here won't get you there*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books.
- Metzger, P. L. (2007). *Consuming Jesus: Beyond race and class divisions in a consumer world*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans.
- Mullins, L. C., Brackett, K. P., Bogie, D. W., & Pruett, D. (2006). The impact of concentrations of religious denominational affiliations on the rate of currently divorced in counties in the United States. *Journal of Family Issues*, 27, 976-1000.

- Newberg, A., & Waldman, M. R. (2009). *How God changes your brain: Breakthrough findings from a leading neuroscientist*. New York: Ballantine Books.
- Newman, I., Benz, C., Weis, D., & McNeil, K. (1997). *Theses and dissertations: A guide to writing in the social and physical sciences*. Lanham, MD: University Press of America.
- Newman, I., & Benz, C. R. (1998). *Qualitative-quantitative research methodology: Exploring the interactive continuum*. Edwardsville, IL: Southern Illinois University Press.
- Newman, I., & McNeil, K. (1998). *Conducting survey research in the social sciences*. Lanham, MD: University Press of America.
- Newman, I., Newman, C., Brown, R., & McNeely, S. (2006). *Conceptual statistics for beginners* (3rd ed.). Lanham, MD: University Press of America.
- Newman, W. M., & D'Antonio, W. V. (1978). "For Christ's sake:" A study of Key '73 in New England. *Review of Religious Research*, 19(2), 139-153.
- Newman, W. M., Halvorson, P. L., & Brown, J. (1977). Problems and potential uses of the 1952 and 1971 National Council of Church's churches and church membership in the United State's studies. *Review of Religious Research*, 18(2), 167-173.
- Newport, F. (2009). *State of the states: Importance of religion*. Retrieved from <http://www.gallup.com/poll/114022/State-States-Importance-Religion.aspx>
- Nichol, F., Cottrel, R., Neufeld, D., & Neuffer, J. (Eds.). (1957). *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible commentary: The Holy Bible with exegetical and expository comment* (Vol. 7). Washington, DC: Review and Herald.
- O'Reilly, C., III, & Chatman, J. (1986). Organizational commitment and psychological attachment: The effects of compliance, identification, and internalization on prosocial behavior. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 71(3), 492-499.
- Park, E., Scherer, C. W., & Glynn, C. J. (2001). Community involvement risk perception at personal and societal levels. *Health Risk and Society*, 3(3), 281-292.
- Post, S. G. (2007a). *Education: Altruistic love & science course competition*. Retrieved June 24, 2010, from <http://www.unlimitedloveinstitute.org/education/index.html>
- Post, S. G. (Ed.). (2007b). *Altruism and health: Perspectives from empirical research*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Post, S. G. (2009). *It's good to be good: Health and the generous heart*. Retrieved from http://www.unlimitedloveinstitute.org/publications/pdf/Good_to_be_Good_2009.pdf

- Putnam, R. D. (2000). *Bowling alone: The collapse and revival of American community*. New York, NY: Simon & Schuster.
- Roehlkepartain, E. C. (2003). *Bulding assets, strengthening faith: An intergenerational survey for congregations*. Minneapolis, MN: Search Institute.
- Rusaw, R., & Swanson, E. (2004). *The externally focused church*. Loveland, CO: Group Publishing.
- Sager, R., & Stephens, L. S. (2005). Serving up sermons: Client's reactions to religious elements of congregation-run feeding establishments. *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, 34(3), 297-315.
- Sahlin, M. (2003). *Adventist congregations today*. Nampa, ID: Pacific Press.
- Sahlin, M., & Richardson, P. (2008). *Seventh-day Adventists in North America: A demographic profile*. Milton Freewater, OR: North American Division of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.
- Salkind, N. J. (2008). *Statistics for people who (think they) hate statistics* (3rd ed.). Los Angeles, CA: Sage.
- Schwadel, P. (2005). Individual, congregational, and denominational effects on church member's civic participation. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 44(2), 159-171.
- Schwarz, C. A. (1996). *Natural church development: A guide to eight essential qualities of healthy churches*. Carol Stream, IL: ChurchSmart Resources.
- Shibley, M. (2005, Fall/Winter). Believing in the none zone: The sacred shape of the secular northwest. *Oregon Humanities*, 1-8.
- Shirky, C. (2008). *Here comes everybody: The power of organizing without organizations*. New York: Penguin Group.
- Siegle, D. (2009). Instrument validity. *Educational Research*. Retrieved May 10, 2009, from <http://www.gifted.uconn.edu/Siegle/research/Instrument%20Reliability%20and%20Validity/Validity.htm>
- Smith, D. H. (1983). Churches are generally ignored in contemporary voluntary action research causes and consequences. *Review of Religious Research*, 24(4), 295-303.
- Stearns, R. (2010). *The hole in our gospel*. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson.

- Stetzer, E. (2008). *The evolution of church growth, church health, and the missional church: An overview of the church growth movement from, and back to, its missional roots*. Retrieved June 30, 2009, from http://www.bhpublishinggroup.com/missionalcode/resources/ASCG_paper_for_presenting.pdf
- Swidler, A. (2002). Saving the self: Endowment versus depletion in American institutions. In R. Madsen (Ed.), *Meaning and modernity: Religion, polity and self* (pp. 41-55). Berkeley, CA: University of CA Press.
- Templeton, J. (1999). *Agape love: A tradition found in eight world religions*. Radnor, PA: Templeton Foundation Press.
- Traggorth, D. (2006, April). Church and state-of-the-art; Neighborhood churches are reinventing themselves through redevelopment--often with new housing. *American Planning Association*, 32-36.
- Underwood, L. G., & Post, S. G. (2004, May 21-23). *Purpose statement*. Paper presented at the Compassionate Love Research Conference, Washington, DC.
- Uslaner, E. M. (2002). Religion and civic engagement in Canada and the United States. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 41(2), 239-254.
- Weigel, G. (2009). *World religions by the numbers*. Retrieved from <http://catholiceducation.org/articles/printarticle.html?id=3353>
- Werning, W. (1999). *12 pillars of a healthy church: Be a life-giving church and center for missionary formation*: Fairway Press.
- White, E. G. (1902). The grace of courtesy. *Review and Herald* (Aug. 20, 1959), para. 26727.
- White, E. G. (1905). Living for Christ. *The Signs of the Times* (Aug. 16, 1905), para. 14446.
- White, E. G. (1909a). *Testimonies for the church* (Vol. 8). Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press.
- White, E. G. (1909b). *Testimonies for the church* (Vol. 9). Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press.
- White, E. G. (1909c). *Testimonies for the church* (Vol. 7). Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press.
- White, E. G. (1909d). *Testimonies for the church* (Vol. 2). Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press.
- White, E. G. (1942). *The ministry of healing*. Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press.

- White, E. G. (2006). *The desire of ages*. Nampa, ID: Pacific Press.
- Wiepking, P., & Mass, I. (2009). Resources that make you generous: Effects of social and human resources on charitable giving. *Social Forces*, 87(4), 1973-1995.
- Woolever, C., & Bruce, D. (2002). *A field guide to U.S. congregations: Who's going where and why*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press.
- Woolever, C., & Bruce, D. (2004). *Beyond the ordinary: Ten strengths of U.S. congregations*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press.
- Woolever, C., Bruce, D., Wulff, K., & Smith-Williams, I. (2006). What do we think about our future and does it matter: Congregational identity and vitality. *Journal of Beliefs and Values: Studies in Religion & Education*, 27(1), 53-64.

CURRICULUM VITA

Curriculum Vita
Rhonda Whitney

503 869-2261

rhondapacs@hotmail.com

Work History

Oregon Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Gladstone, Oregon

Director, Community Outreach

Portland Adventist Community Services, Portland, Oregon

Executive Director

Adventist Medical Center, Portland

Administrative Secretary/Department of Philanthropy

Medical Staff Education Coordinator

Elementary and Secondary School Teacher

Appointments

North American Division Adventist Community Services Governing Board

Oregon Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (ORVOAD), Portland

Adventist Medical Center Governing Board, Portland

North American Division Adventist Community Services Convention Planning

Oregon Food Bank Governing Board

Awards

Adventist Women's Association

Adventist Woman of the Year in Community Services

Portland General Electric and Technical Assistance for Community Services

Community Treasure Award

Publication

Whitney, R. (2009). Surprised by joy: What senior citizens can teach us about leadership. *The Journal of Applied Christian Leadership*, 3(2), 13-32.

Education

Andrews University

Ph.D. dissertation entitled:

*An Investigation of the Relationship Between Community Connectedness and
Congregational Spiritual Vitality.*

Maintain current Seventh-day Adventist denomination teaching credentials

Music grades K-12; Business Education grades 9-12

Holy Names College, Oakland, CA

Certified in Kodaly Music Education

Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI

Secondary teaching endorsement in Business Education

Pacific Union College, Angwin, CA

M.A. in Music Performance

B.A. in Music Education, Secondary Teaching Certificate for Music Education